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THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

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THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

ANALYSIS AND NOTES

BY THE
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AUTHOR OF ANALYSES AND NOTES ON THE EPISTLES TO THE COLOSSIANS
AND TO TIMOTHY, AND THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS,
AND "NOTES ON THE NICENE CREED"

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1900

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GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO

PREFACE.

It is earnestly hoped that these analyses and brief notes may be useful to those who are reading the Epistle of which they treat. They have been drawn up with especial regard to the needs of students in our Church Training Colleges, where, unfortunately, the time which can be devoted to lectures upon the Epistle is limited by the large number of subjects which, under present conditions, the Colleges are bound to include in their curriculum. Most lecturers would probably welcome a syllabus which embraced fewer subjects, and thus gave opportunities for wider reading and for more thorough work in each. It is devoutly to be wished that such a change may come. Meanwhile, the lecturer finds himself hampered in dwelling upon the deeper spiritual truths contained in an Epistle by considerations of time. The writer believes that his endeavour to simplify the study of the actual text is amply justified by the relief which is thus afforded to the lecturer, who can dwell less upon literary difficulties and more upon moral and spiritual teaching.

The cordial welcome given to the writer's previous Analyses (of Colossians, First Thessalonians, and First

and Second Timothy), and the almost unanimous approval of the plan and contents of the books, would seem to imply that these opinions are shared by others who are conversant with our present position and difficulties.

In cases of direct quotation, references have been given in the body of the text, but these references very inadequately represent the indebtedness of the writer to the many excellent works which have already appeared on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Amongst such aids he would like especially to mention Lightfoot's Notes, the volume on the Epistle in the Expositor's Bible, the Speaker's Commentary and the Cambridge Bible, the Commentaries of Ellicott, Mason and Sadler, Godet's Studies on the Epistles, Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, Ramsay's Paul the Traveller, Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, and the New Bible Dictionary edited by Hastings.

The Scriptural quotations are, as a rule, taken from the Authorized Version; where, however, a different reading obtains, more especially if it aids the illustration, the Revised Version has been used. In all cases of direct quotation the spelling of the Bible has been retained, as also the usage with regard to capital letters. For economy of space the biographical and geographical notes have been treated in a special chapter away from the notes on the text.

In the revision of the proofs and in the preparation of the Index invaluable assistance has been rendered by Miss Goodacre, Head Governess of the Ripon College, and to her the writer would tender his very hearty thanks. He would also acknowledge with gratitude many useful suggestions made by several of the Principals of our Church Colleges.

While the book is specially prepared to suit Training College requirements, the notes are complete in themselves, and it is hoped that they may therefore not be without value to the general reader. The writer earnestly trusts that the book may tempt its readers, when time is at their disposal, to read the larger text-books to which reference is made, and to carry on their studies to other Epistles of St. Paul.

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SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THESSALONICA AND THE THESSALONIANS.[1]

Thessalonica. Thessalonica, (the more ancient *Therma*, the modern *Saloniki*,) was situated on the N.W. arm of the Aegean Sea, called in Roman times the Thermaic Gulf (now the *Gulf of Saloniki*). It was thus midway between the Adriatic and the Hellespont, and, being situated on the great Roman road called the *Via Egnatia* (which ran eastward from the Adriatic, and formed the principal means of communication between Rome and her provinces in the East), became a most important military station and commercial centre. Writing a quarter of a century before St. Paul's visit, Strabo describes it as "the most populous city in Macedonia,"[2] and it is still the most important city after Constantinople in European Turkey.

[1] See Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

[2] Godet styles it "the Trieste of the period."

Early History. Under its old name of Therma the city was comparatively unimportant. It was rebuilt and greatly enlarged by Cassander, three centuries before the Christian era, and was then called Thessalonica after Cassander's wife, who was the sister of Alexander the Great. When Macedonia was divided into four governments by the Romans (2nd century B.C.), Thessalonica was made capital of the second district; later, upon their consolidation by Metellus into one province, Thessalonica was practically capital of the whole.

Political Importance in New Testament Times. In consequence of its action during the civil wars after the death of Julius Caesar, Thessalonica was declared a "free city" (1st century B.C.), and had important rights of self-government. Its chief magistrates are styled "politarchs" in the original of Acts xvii. 6. "This term occurs in no other writing; but it may be read to this day on an arch of the early imperial times which spans the main street of the city." We have thus an interesting attestation to the truth of the New Testament record.

Later History. From the Apostolic period onward, Thessalonica became a most important Christian centre. "During several centuries it was the bulwark of Oriental Christendom, and was largely instrumental in the conversion of the Slavonians and Bulgarians. Thus it received the designation of 'the Orthodox City.'" Its population in the 10th century is said to have been 200,000. At the present time it is probably about 80,000, of whom one-third or more are Jews.

The Thessalonians. The population of Thessalonica was, in the main, unquestionably Gentile. There was,

however, a large colony of Jews drawn to the city, in all probability at that period as at every period of its history, by the facilities offered for trade. While at Philippi the only Jewish place of worship was the simple "place of prayer" by the river-side (Acts xvi. 13, R.V.), and while at Amphipolis and Apollonia there were apparently no Jewish colonies for St. Paul to address, at Thessalonica there was "a Synagogue of the Jews"; and the whole of the narrative in the Acts (xvii. 5-9) seems to point to the fact that the Jews were sufficiently numerous to be a power in Thessalonica—"they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city" (xvii. 8). They would, moreover, appear to have been in sufficiently prosperous circumstances to allow of their leaving their city and their trade in order to follow up the Apostle and his companions to Beroea. In addition to the Jewish and heathen population there were many Gentile proselytes—"devout Greeks a great multitude" (xvii. 4)—and these formed the bulk of the congregations which St. Paul addressed on the Sabbath during his short stay in the city. (See also p. 12.)

Thessalonica as a Missionary Centre. It will be seen from the above that Thessalonica possessed several advantages as a centre for missionary work:

(*a*) It was the capital of the district.
(*b*) It was "a free city" with special privileges and powers.
(*c*) It was on the main thoroughfare from Rome to the East.
(*d*) It had easy communication with the sea.
(*e*) It was the outlet for a very fertile district.
(*f*) It was, in consequence of these, an important military station and commercial centre.
(*g*) There was a large Jewish element in the population. This gave Paul and Silas the necessary *opening* for their missionary work.

Its convenience and value as a centre are shown in the practical results of the Apostle's work:

(*a*) It was through Thessalonica that the whole district was enlightened:

> **1 Thess. i. 8.** For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, etc.

(*b*) The good tidings spread even beyond the borders of Macedonia. (See above verse.)

(*c*) The influence of Thessalonica was maintained throughout the early centuries of Christianity. (See p. 2.)

2. ST. PAUL IN MACEDONIA.

The Second Apostolic Journey. In the year 51 or 52 A.D., St. Paul, taking *Silas* as his companion, started on his Second Missionary Journey, "being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord." After passing through Syria and Cilicia, and confirming the Christian communities in those districts, the two missionaries came to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra St. Paul met *Timothy*, whom he had in all probability converted on his first visit to the city. "Him would Paul have to go forth with him," circumcising him first, since he was the son of a Greek father. The three companions—Paul, Silas, and Timothy—then "went on their way through the cities," working gradually westward through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.

Directed by the Holy Spirit to Macedonia. After passing through the centre of what is now known as Asia Minor, and coming to a district which marked the extreme west of his journeys hitherto, St. Paul discovered that his path was being chosen for him by God Himself. Three times he found himself driven to take a certain course, although it seems clear that it did not come in his original plans.

(*a*) He was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in *Asia* (*i.e.* in the small Roman province of Asia) (Acts xvi. 6).

(*b*) He and his companions assayed to go into *Bithynia* (on the south shore of the Euxine), and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not (xvi. 7, R.V.).

(*c*) He had now endeavoured to go to the West (Asia), and also to the North (Bithynia). Being forbidden each time, he found himself at Troas, having been thus driven by the Spirit to take a line between the two. At Troas St. Paul had a vision in which a man of Macedonia besought him saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Concluding that God had called them, and having been now joined by *St. Luke*, the missionaries sailed from Troas, and after passing Samothracia and landing at Neapolis made their way to Philippi.

Well might St. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, emphasize the fact that the Gospel came to them *in the Holy Spirit*, and that they had been *called of God*. Cf.

1 Thess. i. 4 (R.V.). Knowing, brethren, beloved by God, your election.

2 Thess. ii. 13 (R.V.). God chose you from the beginning unto salvation.

2 Thess. ii. 14. He called you through our gospel.

1 Thess. i. 5. Our gospel came unto you . . . in the Holy Ghost.

Well might he also pray that the God Who had compelled him to visit them in the first instance, even against his original intention, would again *direct his way to them.*

1 Thess. iii. 11 (R.V.). May our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you.

St. Paul at Philippi. St. Paul's first European church was founded at Philippi, a Roman "colony" in Macedonia. Of all his churches it was the one for which he had the most affectionate regard. It was the only one from which he consented to receive pecuniary aid. Twice when he was at *Thessalonica*, once in *Corinth*, and again in *Rome*, he received contributions from his beloved Philippian Christians.

Phil. iv. 15. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel . . . no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but *ye only*. For even in

> Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. (Cf. also 2 Cor. xi. 9 and Phil. iv. 10.)

The events at Philippi may be briefly summarized. They include the conversion of Lydia and her household, the casting out of the spirit of divination, and the imprisonment, scourging, and release of Paul and Silas. There is an allusion to this persecution of Paul and Silas in the first Epistle:

> **1 Thess. ii. 2.** Even after we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

Philippi to Thessalonica. St. Paul then travelled by the *Via Egnatia* (see p. 1) through *Amphipolis* (the capital of the first division of Macedonia) and *Apollonia* to *Thessalonica*. As no mention is made of any missionary work at the two intermediate cities, it is reasonable to infer that they were only halting-places for the night, each stage being a fair day's journey.

St. Paul's Companions. Of the four companions, only *Paul and Silas* are mentioned in the Acts in connection with the events at Thessalonica. *Luke* had been left behind at Philippi. This is quite clear from the use of the third personal pronoun in Acts xvi. 40 (cf. ver. 16). *Timothy* is not mentioned until the departure of Paul from Beroea (xvii. 14), and it has been suggested that, like St. Luke, Timothy had been left behind at Philippi.[1] It appears clear, however, from the two Epistles to the Thessalonians that Timothy shared with Paul and Silas the labours at Thessalonica, for

> (*a*) He is included in the opening address of each Epistle: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus," and the plural is maintained

[1] Conybeare and Howson.

throughout the Epistles, even where the founding of the Church is mentioned:[1]

1 Thess. i. 5. Ye know what manner of men *we* were among you.

1 Thess. i. 6. Ye became followers of *us*.

2 Thess. iii. 7. *We* behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.

(*b*) We may notice also that, while Timothy is not mentioned in the Acts as present at Thessalonica, neither is he mentioned at any of the preceding places, although he had been with Paul and Silas all the way from Lystra, and we read elsewhere of his work at Philippi (Phil. ii. 22).

It is possible that Timothy stayed a short time at Philippi and rejoined the Apostle at Thessalonica, but it must be remembered that the whole stay at the latter city was probably short. If we consider the language of 1 and 2 Thess. as conclusive in giving Timothy a share in the preaching at Thessalonica, it would seem improbable that he stayed behind for any length of time at Philippi.

St. Paul at Thessalonica. The account in the Acts of the Apostles of the visit of Paul and Silas to Thessalonica is short and may be given at length.

Acts xvii. (R.V.).

1. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:
2. And Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days (marg. *weeks*) reasoned with them from the scriptures,
3. Opening and alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ.
4. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

[1] Conybeare and Howson (against Lightfoot) maintain that this is simply the first person plural of an author, and cite 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2, 6 in support.

5. But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people.
6. And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;
7. Whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.
8. And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.
9. And when they had taken security for Jason and the rest, they let them go.
10. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea.

To the account thus given by St. Luke we may add one or two facts from the Epistles:

(*a*) *St. Paul laboured* (*as a tent-maker*) *during his stay there.*

1 Thess. ii. 9. Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: working night and day that we might not burden any of you.
2 Thess. iii. 8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

(*b*) *He received on two occasions pecuniary assistance from Philippi.*

Phil. iv. 16. Even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

(*c*) *The preaching of the Gospel in Thessalonica was attended with rapid and marked success,*

1 Thess. i. 5. Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.
2 Thess. i. 4. We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God.

(*d*) *but was accompanied and followed by bitter persecution.*

1 Thess. ii. 14. Ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they (*i.e.* the churches in Judaea) did of the Jews.

2 Thess. i. 4. . . . in all your persecutions and tribulations.

Duration of St. Paul's Stay. According to the account in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue on *three Sabbath days* (R.V. marg. "*three weeks*"). This does not necessarily imply that St. Paul's stay in the city *was limited to* three weeks, although throughout the First Epistle there is constant rejoicing over the glorious results of this visit to Thessalonica, a rejoicing which is easily understood if the visit were in reality as short as the sacred narrative might be held to imply. There are many considerations, however, which would seem to suggest a longer stay.

(*a*) There was sufficient time for the whole city to be moved, so that the politarchs were obliged to take action.

(*b*) The marvellous results of the Apostle's work, while not impossible after three weeks, would seem to imply a longer period.

(*c*) The contrast between the Jews of Beroea and those of Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 11) would seem to be somewhat unfair, if so great results had been obtained in three weeks only.

(*d*) The instruction in the main points of Christian doctrine seems to have been thorough and complete. (Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 9, "Ye have no need that I write unto you.")

(*e*) There was a definite Church organization, and at the time the first Epistle was written there was need for correction in points of discipline (1 Thess. v. 12).

(*f*) There was time for the Philippians to send once and again to St. Paul's necessity.

(*g*) It was St. Paul's usual practice in a new city to address the Jews first, and to turn to the Gentiles only when the Jews

refused to receive him. The "three sabbaths" probably represent the time during which he still worked amongst the Jews. So, for example, at Ephesus he addressed the Jews three months, but stayed two years in the city (Acts xix. 8-10).

Ramsay suggests *five months* as a possible period of stay. In any case, shorter or longer, the Apostle finds abundant cause of gratitude when he considers the marvellous progress already made.

Substance of St. Paul's Teaching at Thessalonica. St. Paul in the Epistles to the Thessalonians alludes to the subject-matter of his preaching as *the Gospel of God* (1 Thess. ii. 2), *our Gospel* (1 Thess. i. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 14), *the Gospel* (1 Thess. ii. 4), *the Gospel of Christ* (1 Thess. iii. 2), *the word of the Lord* (2 Thess. iii. 1), *the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 Thess. i. 8), *the traditions* (2 Thess. ii. 15).

The main points of his teaching as given in the account in the Acts are:

(*a*) The death and resurrection of the Messiah were foretold in Holy Scripture (Acts xvii. 3).

(*b*) The man, Jesus, Whom Paul preached, and Who had died and risen again, was the Christ (*ib.*).

(*c*) It was into His Kingdom that all might hope for admission ("saying that there is another king, one Jesus," xvii. 7).

While, however, these were the principal texts upon which St. Paul preached, both at Thessalonica and elsewhere (cf. xviii. 28, ix. 22, etc.), the general instruction seems to have been particularly thorough. The Thessalonians were very willing and receptive, and the Apostle was able in a comparatively short time to teach successfully and organize satisfactorily. From the two Epistles we gather that his exhortation and teaching included not merely the leading Christian doctrines, but their bearing on

every-day life. (Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12; iv. 1, 2-6, 9; v. 1, 2; 2 Thess. i. 10; ii. 15; iii. 7-10, etc.)

Results of his Teaching. As has been already mentioned, the results of the preaching of Paul and Silas were immediate and very striking.

1. *As regards the Thessalonian converts.*
   (*a*) They received the message as indeed the word of God (1 Thess. ii. 13).
   (*b*) They tried to practise the Christian virtue of brotherly love (1 Thess. iv. 10).
   (*c*) Their influence spread abroad to Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess. i. 8).
2. *As regards the Apostle.*
   (*a*) The result of his work gave him the greatest possible joy (1 Thess. ii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 4).
   (*b*) It filled his heart with gratitude to God (1 Thess. i. 2; 2 Thess. i. 3; ii. 13).
   (*c*) It helped his work elsewhere (1 Thess. i. 8; 2 Thess. i. 4).
   (*d*) It created the most affectionate relationship between himself and the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 8).
3. *As regards the Thessalonian Jews.*
   They persecuted the Apostles in Thessalonica, and followed them up to Beroea.

The Thessalonian Converts. According to Acts xvii. 4 the Christian Church at Thessalonica was made up of three classes:

(*a*) *Some* of the **Jews**.
(*b*) *A great multitude* of **devout Greeks** (*i.e.* proselytes).
(*c*) *Not a few* of the **chief women** (*i.e.* women nobly born).

The text, however, is not free from difficulty. Ramsay prefers a reading, (supported by the *Vulgate*,) which recognizes four classes of hearers, viz.:

(*a*) Jews . . . *some.*
(*b*) The devout, or God-fearing (*i.e.* proselytes), . . . *many.*
(*c*) The Greeks (*i.e.* Gentiles) . . . *a great multitude.*
(*d*) The leading women . . . *not a few.*

This reading, if correct, would bring the account in the Acts into line with the impression left upon us by the First Epistle, which certainly suggests a Church the mass of whose members were converts direct from heathenism. The following are amongst the considerations which suggest a *Church mainly Gentile*:

(*a*) They had *turned from idols* to serve God (1 Thess. i. 9).

(*b*) They had suffered *of their own countrymen* the same things which the Judaean churches had suffered of *the Jews* (ii. 14).

(*c*) They were taught by the Apostles (ii. 3) by word of mouth, *no appeal being made to an earlier knowledge of God.*

(*d*) There are *no quotations from, or allusions to, the Old Testament Scriptures.* Where St. Paul borrows the imagery of the prophecy of Daniel concerning Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Thess. ii. 4) there is no mention of Daniel, nor is there any suggestion that it is a quotation. The use of the word "Satan" and the term "temple of God" might be held to imply some acquaintance on their part with Judaism.

(*e*) *The language used against the Jews* would suggest that the Church which was being addressed was not largely Jewish.

It may be mentioned also that *women*, both in Asia Minor and Macedonia, occupied a better position than in Athens. It is interesting to notice, therefore, that St. Paul's Macedonian converts included:

(*a*) *at Philippi*, . . . Lydia, Euodia, Syntyche (Phil. iv. 2) and probably many other women.

(*b*) *at Thessalonica*, . . . "Not a few" of the leading women of the city.

(*c*) *at Beroea*, . . . "Not a few" Greek women of honourable estate.

To sum up: the Church at Thessalonica was in the main a Gentile Church, with men of all classes of society, but with women only who were of good birth or in good position; there were also many proselytes, and a few Jews.

But few Thessalonian Christians are known to us by name. In addition to *Jason* (who is mentioned again in Rom. xvi. 21 as sending salutations from Corinth), we have *Aristarchus* and *Secundus* (Acts xx. 4), who journeyed with the Apostle from Troas to Jerusalem at the end of his Third Missionary Journey, and possibly *Demas*, who deserted St. Paul during his final imprisonment and went (? home) to Thessalonica.

3. ST. PAUL IN ACHAIA.

Departure from Thessalonica. The riot of the Jews and their worthless associates, and the trial of Jason by the politarchs, led to the abrupt departure of Paul and Silas from Thessalonica for Beroea.

> **Acts xvii. 10.** And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea.

Here they were apparently joined later by Timothy (Acts xvii. 14). The preaching of the Gospel at Beroea was eminently successful until the Jews of Thessalonica followed the Apostles and stirred up the multitude against them. Once more Paul had to flee from the scene of successful labour. He had received a special call, however, for Macedonia, and it was only the pressure of circumstances which compelled him to go southward to Achaia,—and first to *Athens*. Silas and Timothy were left for the present at Beroea (probably in the hope that they might soon bring word of the possibility of return[1]), but were commanded to come to the Apostle with all speed.

Anxiety of St. Paul. Mission of Timothy. In all probability Silas and Timothy obeyed their leader's command, and rejoined him at Athens. The Acts of the Apostles is silent concerning this, and merely mentions a subsequent re-union at Corinth (xviii. 5). Several considerations may be urged, however, in support of the meeting at Athens:

[1] Ramsay.

(*a*) It is unlike St. Luke to have mentioned the charge unless it had been carried out. Moreover, he distinctly states that Paul *waited for them* at Athens (Acts. xvii. 16), and there is no appearance of an *abrupt departure* from Athens.

(*b*) St. Paul had been in Corinth some time before the return of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, as recorded in Acts xviii. 5. And this after a stay of some weeks in Athens; whereas the charge had been to come to him "with all speed." A week or two would have been quite sufficient.

(*c*) 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2 distinctly mentions the sending of Timothy *from Athens* to Macedonia.

When, then, Silas and Timothy rejoined St. Paul at Athens and had nothing to report as to any possibility of his revisiting Macedonia, the Apostle's anxiety became most intense. He had hoped against hope to be able to see his Thessalonian converts again. This being impossible, he determined to send and hear of their welfare, even though it meant his being left at Athens alone. This yearning and reluctant decision are clear from the First Epistle:

ii. 17 (R.V.). We, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire; because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us.

iii. 1 (R.V.). Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone: and sent Timothy . . . to establish you, and to comfort you.

iii. 10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face.

Timothy was accordingly sent to Thessalonica, and it would seem that Silas accompanied him into Macedonia (probably to Philippi), since the two returned together from Macedonia to Achaia (Acts xviii. 5).

Return of Timothy. His Report. Before Timothy returned from Thessalonica Paul had left Athens for *Corinth.*

In all probability his whole stay in Athens had been but short, (a few weeks only,) for there was time for him to work with success in Corinth before Silas and Timotheus rejoined him (Acts xviii. 4).

Timothy brought such tidings of the Thessalonian Church as to fill the Apostle's heart with joy and with gratitude to God. He had feared lest his young converts should have been unsettled in faith because of his persecutions and their own (1 Thess. iii. 3); he had had an uneasy feeling that, apart from this, the tempter might have been able to work evil in the Church (*ib.* iii. 5); he had, therefore, greatly desired to hear that all was going well with the disciples he was not privileged to revisit (iii. 6). Timothy's report partly satisfied his affectionate longings, while it quite stilled his fears. The messenger told the Apostle that his loving desire was reciprocated by the Thessalonians themselves (iii. 6), and that, so far from being shaken in faith, the Thessalonian Church was "standing fast in the Lord" (iii. 8), strong in faith, although not yet perfect (iii. 10), and abounding in love (iv. 10). There were, indeed, one or two serious faults which needed remedying, and one or two misunderstandings which needed clearing up, but great progress had been already made, and the Apostle was too wise to expect perfection in a Church so recently established and placed in a position of such exceptional difficulty. His letter was written immediately (iii. 6) after Timothy's return, and it forms the Apostle's comment on his messenger's report.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians. The subject matter of the First Epistle follows naturally from what has been said with regard to the occasion which called it

forth. It divides easily into two parts. The *first* (chaps. i.-iii.) contains the Apostle's congratulation on the good work already begun; the *second* (chaps. iv.-v.) consists of a little teaching and exhortation, rendered necessary by his converts' intellectual difficulties and moral temptations. The instructive portion is an answer to certain Thessalonian misunderstandings with regard to the share of the dead in the joy of Christ's coming. Certain members of the Christian community had passed or were passing away, and their friends left behind were indulging in a hopeless sorrow, arising from fear lest the dead should be debarred from the pleasure attending the Second Advent of Christ. The Apostle endeavours to comfort them by showing that all alike, quick and dead, will be caught up in the clouds to meet their Lord in the air, and that all true Christians, whether alive or dead when their Master comes, will after that great day "be ever with the Lord." He then gives further instruction concerning the Second Advent, and deduces the double lesson of watchfulness and godly living.

The moral teaching includes a warning against impurity (the special temptation arising from their position in the midst of a heathen population), an exhortation to watchfulness and industry (following naturally on the teaching with regard to the Second Advent), and directions to them as a *Christian congregation* to observe healthy discipline, and to value and use their spiritual gifts.

Further Report . . . Second Epistle. It would seem that shortly after the First Epistle was written, and while Paul was still at Corinth (see next chapter), a further report came from Thessalonica. In several matters

with regard to which the Apostle had written there was marked progress. In spite of constant persecution, heroic endurance had continued, faith had grown, and love had become more expansive; the hopeless sorrow for the Christian dead is no more heard of, and altogether there was much to give the Apostle joy. But if one difficulty concerning the Second Advent of Christ had been removed, another had taken its place. False reports had been circulated, claiming Apostolic authority, that the day of the Lord was at hand, and the feverish unrest consequent upon the acceptance of the report had led to idleness and disorder amongst certain members of the Church.

In order to meet both phases of the report—to express thankful congratulation for spiritual progress, and to give necessary instruction and exhortation—the Apostle wrote and sent the Second Epistle, in which, after expressing a master's joyous pride in pupils so full of promise, he shows clearly that there are considerations which make a speedy Advent practically impossible, and gives definite and authoritative injunctions with regard to the treatment of disorderly and disobedient members. (See p. 24.)

Summary of the Course of Events. If we accept the interpretation given above of the various passages relative to the movements of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, the following will be an outline of the course of events from the arrival at Thessalonica to the despatch of the Second Epistle:

Paul and Silas arrive at Thessalonica.
Timothy arrives later.
Paul and Silas escape by night and go to Beroea.
Timothy arrives at Beroea with them or later.
Paul leaves for Athens, Silas and Timothy remaining at Beroea.

Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul at Athens.
Silas and Timothy depart for Macedonia—Silas for Philippi, Timothy for Thessalonica.
Paul leaves Athens and goes to Corinth.
Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul at Corinth.
Paul sends the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.
Further tidings of the Thessalonian Church.
Paul while still at Corinth sends the Second Epistle.

Later Visits of St. Paul to Macedonia. St. Paul's earnest desire to revisit his Macedonian Churches was realized later on. Three subsequent visits are mentioned in the New Testament.

1. In the Third Missionary Journey, *outward* (Acts xx. 1).
2. In the Third Missionary Journey, *return* (Acts xx. 3).
3. In the interval between the two Roman imprisonments (Phil. ii. 24 and 1 Tim. i. 3).

In no case, however, is there any special mention of a visit to Thessalonica, although the strong probability is that the city would be visited on all three occasions.

4. THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

Considerations which help to fix the Date of the Earlier Epistle. It has been already mentioned (p. 17) that the First Epistle was, in all probability, written at Corinth immediately after the return of Timothy from his mission to Thessalonica. As the time of writing the Second Epistle is partly fixed by the time of the First, it may be useful to give here a summary of the internal evidence helping us to arrive at the above conclusion.

(*a*) It was after St. Paul had visited Athens (1 Thess. iii. 1);
(*b*) yet but a short time after he had left Thessalonica (*ib.* ii. 17).
(*c*) It was immediately after the return of Timothy from Macedonia (iii. 6);
(*d*) which return happened some little time after St. Paul had reached Corinth (Acts xviii. 5).
(*e*) Silas was with St. Paul at the time of writing (1 Thess. i. 1). Silas is not known to have been with St. Paul after this stay at Corinth.

St. Paul commenced his second journey in A.D. 51 or 52, reached Thessalonica probably in 52, and Corinth a few months later, in 52 or 53. The First Epistle, therefore, was written late in 52 or early in 53.

Time and Place of Writing the Second Epistle. The Second Epistle was, in all probability, written but a few months after the First, and while St. Paul was still

at Corinth. This seems clear from the following considerations:

(*a*) Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are mentioned together in the opening salutation. They were together at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5), but, as stated above, we have no grounds for believing them ever to have been together again.

(*b*) The subject matter and general character of the two Epistles are the same, but are unlike those of any other Epistle of St. Paul. This points to their having been written at the same period of his life.

(*c*) The persecution of the Apostle by "unreasonable and wicked men" (iii. 2) may very well be identical with the "insurrection" against St. Paul at Corinth described in Acts xviii. 12.

Some writers on the Epistle have maintained that the numbering is wrong, and that the Second Epistle was written first. This is extremely unlikely, if not impossible.

(*a*) The Second Epistle shows spiritual progress in the Thessalonian Church as compared with the First. Faith has grown exceedingly (i. 3), love abounds (*ib.*).

(*b*) Moreover, this would appear to have been actually *the consequence* of exhortation, etc., contained in the First Epistle (1 Thess. iii. 10, 12, iv. 10).

(*c*) The personal touches of 1 Thess. ii. 1-12, are what we should more readily expect in a first letter than in a second.

(*d*) The Thessalonian difficulty, which the Second Epistle specially meets (disorder and idleness consequent on feverish expectations of the Second Advent) would naturally be a later development than that of the First Epistle (misgivings concerning the place of the dead at that coming).

(*e*) The Second Epistle alludes to some *former letter* of the Apostle which had been misunderstood (see note on ii. 2). This may possibly have been the First Epistle. (See also ii. 15.)

The Second Epistle would seem, then, to have been written at Corinth in the autumn or winter of A.D. 53.

Place of the Thessalonian Epistles amongst St. Paul's Writings. The Epistles of St. Paul fall into four

groups, according to time of writing, and to a certain extent also according to subject matter, mode of treatment, or characteristic expressions.

1. 1 *and* 2 *Thessalonians*, written probably at Corinth on the second journey, A.D. 52-53.
2. *Galatians*, 1 *and* 2 *Corinthians*, *Romans*, written during the third journey, A.D. 56-58.
3. *Philippians*, *Colossians*, *Philemon*, *Ephesians*, written during the first Roman imprisonment, A.D. 62-63.
4. 1 *Timothy*, *Titus*, *and* 2 *Timothy*; the first two written in the interval between the two imprisonments, the last during the second imprisonment, A.D. 65-67.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are, therefore, *the earliest of St. Paul's writings*. The first Epistle may possibly have been *the earliest of all the New Testament Scriptures*. Yet we find in it mention of a Church organization, and the readers are addressed as having already been well instructed in the main truths of the Christian religion. The articles of our Creed were unquestionably articles of the Thessalonian Creed when St. Paul wrote—a large number of them are actually noticed in the Epistle as having been accepted and understood.

As bearing out *the early date of the Epistles*, we may notice:

1. There is no mention whatever of subjects which, a little later in the Apostle's life, assumed great importance and needed careful handling, *e.g.* the doctrine of *Justification by Faith* (Galatians and Romans), the incipient *Gnosticism* of Asia Minor (Colossians).
2. The prominence given to the teaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ is itself an argument in favour of an early date. St. Paul to the close of his life probably looked for the somewhat speedy advent of our Lord. Cf.

   Phil. iv. 5 (written during the first imprisonment at Rome). The Lord is at hand.

While, however, in his later years, after much persecution and trouble, he certainly expected death (cf. Phil. i. 23, 2 Tim. iv. 6), in his earlier ministry it would appear that he considered it as at least possible that he himself might be alive when Christ came.

> **1 Cor. xv. 51.** We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment . . . at the last trump.

So in the First Epistle such verses as,

> **1 Thess. iv. 15.** We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
>
> **1 Thess. iv. 17.** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.

while they are not conclusive, at least suggest that they belong to the period when St. Paul hoped to be alive at the Great Day to welcome his returning Lord.

But the Apostle was always careful to emphasize *the uncertainty* of it all (1 Thess. v. 2, etc.), and in the Second Epistle he shows that a *very* early date is exceedingly improbable, as there is much to happen first.

Circumstances which led to the Second Epistle being written. It has already been shown (p. 18) that the letter followed upon a report which the Apostle and his companions had received of the state of affairs in the Thessalonian Church subsequent to its receiving the First Epistle. The report showed that while there was much to call forth thanksgiving, there was that also which seemed to necessitate Apostolic *instruction* and *exhortation*, and in certain quarters *reproof*. The points calling for special attention on the part of the Apostle were these:

1. *The Apostle's teaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ had been misunderstood and misrepresented.*

   He had said in his former Epistle that that Great Day would come upon them *suddenly* (1 Thess. v. 2) and *without warning* (v. 3), and he had seemed to imply that it might happen *in his own lifetime* (iv. 17). But he had insisted strongly upon the *uncertainty* of it all (v. 1-12), and that the Christian's duty, in consequence, was to be watchful and sober (v. 6, 8).

But now false teaching was present in the Church, to the effect that the Day of the Lord was not merely *near*, but actually *upon them* ("now present," 2 Thess. ii. 2, R.V.). It is not quite clear whether, on the part of these false teachers, it was entirely a misrepresentation of the Apostle's words, wilful or unintentional, or whether it was partly a fancied revelation and partly a misconception of what the Apostle had said. In any case St. Paul mentions three sources from which this teaching purported to derive its authority:

(*a*) *spirit, i.e.* fancied revelation of the Holy Spirit.
(*b*) *word, i.e.* the Apostle's (?) "word of mouth."
(*c*) *letter, i.e.* the Apostle's letter (either a forged letter or the First or some other Epistle wrongly interpreted). (See note on ii. 2.)

2. *This false teaching had had a natural and unwholesome effect on the lives of the brethren in Thessalonica.*

There were two evil results, both natural, and both needing Apostolic interference.

(*a*) *The community as a whole* were in state of feverish expectation and unrest, consequent (ii. 2) upon the combined fear and hope that the Day of the Lord was upon them. They were "shaken in mind" (*i.e.* driven from their sober senses), or, at least, "troubled" (*i.e.* confused and unsettled), and therefore quite unable to carry out the earlier Apostolic injunction to watch and to be sober.

(*b*) *The weaker members of the community* gave up work altogether. In a world about to end, why should men labour and strive when they could not hope to see the completion of their labours?

Possibly many gave up work to live a higher spiritual life, but with many it was a mere idle subsistence on the charity of others or on the support of the Church as a whole, and the only business followed by them was the business of other people. They gave up honest labour to become disorderly busybodies.

To remove these evils, and to give such instruction as would prevent their recurrence, the Apostle wrote the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians

General Contents and Arrangement.—As has been already stated (p. 24), the Epistle commences with Thanksgiving (ch. i.), and follows this up with Instruction (ii.) and Exhortation (iii.). The plan of the Epistle is, therefore, exceedingly simple, the main divisions corresponding with the actual chapters. A fuller analysis will be given later. The following brief summary will give a general idea of the contents of the Epistle. The Apostle, it may be noted, joins his companions Silvanus and Timotheus with himself throughout the letter.

After the opening *Salutation* (i. 1-2), St. Paul, as in his earlier Epistle, and generally in his later ones, offers his sincere *Thanksgiving* to God for the progress so far made in the Church he is addressing. Here, the Thanksgiving is unusually fervent (i. 3-4), for their faith grows exceedingly and their love abounds; the Thessalonian Church is the Apostle's pride (4). He next eulogizes their patience under affliction (4), and comforts them with the thought that there is a Day of Judgment coming, which, while it will be a day of terror to the unrighteous, will be for them a day of rest (7) and glory (10) and a kingdom (5). Then, as in several of the Pauline Epistles, follows a *Prayer* for steadfastness in faith, and continued progress in spiritual life (11-12).

In the second section of the Epistle, St. Paul aims at removing erroneous ideas concerning the Second Advent of Christ. The Great Day may be near, or it may not, but it is certainly not actually upon them. There is much to happen before that Day shall come. All this feverish expectation, therefore, is unnecessary and unwise. The pretended revelations of their false teachers are absolutely without authority, either as from himself or from the Holy

Spirit of God (ii. 1-2). When Christ comes there will be a terrible revelation of Antichrist, whom the Apostle describes both in himself and in his evil works. But at present there is a restraining influence, well known to the Thessalonians themselves, and until that restraint is removed, the revelation of Antichrist cannot be accomplished (3-12). Again the Apostle pours forth a joyous thanksgiving to God for his beloved Thessalonian Church, and follows it up with an exhortation to steadfastness, and a prayer that God will stablish them in every good work and word.

The final section is hortative and disciplinary. After a request for their prayers, the writer condemns the conduct of the idle and disorderly members of the community, who have given up honest labour, and who occupy their time with the affairs of others, upon whose charity they live. The Apostle holds up himself and his companions as examples of dignified independence and honest labour (8); he reminds the Thessalonians of his own oral precept that the Church should not waste its substance on its idle members (10), and he recommends their taking the matter into their own hands, temporarily excommunicating if necessary, so that this plague spot on an otherwise healthy Church may be removed (6-15). Again the Apostle prays for them (16), and finally closes the Epistle with his customary salutation and benediction (17-18).

Genuineness of the Epistle.—The authenticity of the Epistles to the Thessalonians has never been seriously doubted. They are mentioned as Epistles of St. Paul in the Muratorian Fragment (*cir.* A.D. 200), and remained unchallenged by any Christian sect or individual until the present century. The internal evidence is exceedingly

strong in their favour. The following points may be noticed:

(*a*) The evident genuineness of the picture they afford of the affectionate relationship between St. Paul and his converts.

(*b*) The obvious genuineness also of the account of St. Paul's work at Thessalonica (1 Thess. ii.).

Various Passages:

(*c*) **1 Thess. iv. 15.** "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," etc.

This could hardly have been inserted by one writing after the Apostle's death, since he would have known that St. Paul *did not remain until the coming of the Lord.*

(*d*) **1 Thess. v. 27.** "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read," etc.

A writer of the second century would not have been likely to insert this, when it could easily have been proved whether there was this public reading or not.

(*e*) **2 Thess. ii. 4.** "So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God."

The fulfilment of the prophecy is, probably, not to be sought in any definite act connected with the Jewish Temple, the outrages upon the sacredness of the Temple being mere types and shadows of the greater sacrilege when Antichrist should come. (See note on ii. 4.) Still the idea of the verse is that of the Temple as the visible and tangible "Sanctuary" of God. The verse could hardly have been written, therefore, after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

The Epistles are frequently quoted as St. Paul's from the second century onwards.

"No writings of the New Testament are more strongly and unanimously supported by the testimony of the Early Church" (Cambridge Bible).

5. BIOGRAPHICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

(*a*) *Biographical.*

Paul. The history of St. Paul in connection with Thessalonica and the Thessalonians has been already given (pp. 7-14).

It may be convenient, however, to summarize here the personal notices of him *in the Epistle itself.* These include:

1. His conduct at Thessalonica (iii. 7), his manual labour and dignified independence (iii. 8, 9).
2. His preaching at Thessalonica (i, 10, ii. 14, iii. 6); his special teaching concerning Antichrist (ii. 4, 5); his precept concerning the idle (iii. 10).
3. His pride in the Thessalonian Church (i. 4).
4. His former Epistle (ii. 2, ii. 15).
5. The mark of authenticity in all his Epistles (iii. 17).

Silvanus, or **Silas,** styled in Acts xv. 32 a "prophet"—that is, an "inspired preacher"—was probably a Hellenistic Jew and a Roman citizen (Acts xvi. 37). He was commissioned (as one of "the chief men of the brethren" in Judaea) with Paul and Barnabas to convey to Antioch the decree of the Council of Jerusalem (xv. 22). He was chosen by St. Paul as his companion in his Second Missionary Journey (xv. 40), and with him was imprisoned at Philippi (xvi. 19), and compelled to escape by night from Thessalonica (xvii. 10). When Paul was sent away from Beroea, Silas was left behind with Timothy. The two rejoined their leader at Corinth (xviii. 5), having, in

all probability, first followed him to Athens, whence they had been despatched again to Macedonia (see p. 16). He is several times mentioned as being with St. Paul at Corinth (1 Thess. i. 1, 2 Thess. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 19). After this he is not mentioned again in connection with St. Paul. In all probability, however, he is the Silvanus who was the bearer of the First Epistle of St. Peter to Asia Minor (1 Peter v. 12).

For his share in the evangelization of the Thessalonians, see p. 7.

Timotheus, or **Timothy,** was the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother. His home was at Lystra, where he was baptized by St. Paul, probably on the first Apostolic journey. On the second journey he was added to the company of Paul and Silas, journeying with them through Phrygia and Galatia to Macedonia. His mission from Athens to Thessalonica and his return from Macedonia to Corinth have already been treated fully (p. 15). He was with the Apostle again during (probably throughout) the third journey. He was with him during the first imprisonment at Rome; was left at Ephesus in the interval between the two imprisonments; was still at Ephesus in the second imprisonment until his presence at Rome was earnestly solicited by the Apostle shortly before his death (2 Tim. iv. 21). Of all St. Paul's companions he was the most constant and the most beloved.

(*b*) *Geographical.*

Achaia, in New Testament times, was the name applied to the whole country of Greece. It was governed by a Pro-consul (Acts xviii. 12, R.V.) who lived at Corinth, the

commercial capital of the province. Athens was the literary capital. There were Jewish settlements and synagogues both at Corinth (Acts xviii. 4) and Athens (Acts xvii. 17), and this helps to account for the rapid sounding forth of the Word of the Lord from Thessalonica to Achaia (1 Thess. i. 8).

Athens was the "chief seat of Grecian learning and civilisation during the golden period of the history of Greece." It was situated on an arm of the Aegean Sea; its port was the Piraeus. St. Paul visited Athens after his departure from Beroea (Acts xvii. 15), and it was from Athens, in all probability, that Timothy was despatched on a mission to Thessalonica, the return from which was the occasion of the writing of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Corinth, situated at the southern extremity of the isthmus connecting the two great divisions of Greece, was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, Athens being the chief educational centre. St. Paul visited Achaia on his second and third journeys. It was at Corinth, during the second journey, that the Epistles to the Thessalonians were written.

Macedonia was the district lying to the north-west of the Aegean Sea, and stretching southwards as far as Achaia. Three Macedonian Churches were founded by St. Paul in his Second Missionary Journey, viz. at *Philippi*, *Thessalonica*, and *Beroea*. Other Macedonian places visited in the line of march were Neapolis, Amphipolis, and Apollonia.

Philippi was a city of Macedonia about nine miles from the northern shore of the Aegean Sea, and three days' journey from Thessalonica. It lay, like Thessalonica, on

the Via Egnatia (see p. 1), and was a Roman "colony." Its port was Neapolis. It was at Philippi that Paul and Silas founded the first European Church; and it was from Philippi that St. Paul received pecuniary aid twice during his short stay at Thessalonica (Phil. iv. 16). St. Paul alludes in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (ii. 2) to the indignities to which he was subjected while at Philippi.

Thessalonica (see p. 1).

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

A.V. (1611).

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

4. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5. *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6. Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7. And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

R.V. (1881).

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;

2. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth;

4. so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure;

5. *which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6. if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you,

7. and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power

8. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

11. Where also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus:

9. who shall suffer punishment, *even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

10. when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.

11. To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and *every* work of faith, with power;

12. that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II.

1. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or

1. Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him;

2. to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is *now* present;

3. let no man beguile you in any wise: for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,

4. he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God

that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9. *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved.

11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.

5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6. And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season.

7. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only *there is* one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.

8. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming;

9. *even he*, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10. and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie:

12. that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13. But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14. whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

15. So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.

16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father which loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace,

17. comfort your hearts and stablish them in every good work and word.

CHAPTER III.

1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

2. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also *it is* with you;

2. and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.

3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and guard you from the evil *one*.

4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command.

5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

7. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9. Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10. For even when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

14. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

17. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

8. neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you:

9. not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.

10. For even when we were with you this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.

11. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies.

12. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

14. And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed.

15. And *yet* count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

17. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

SHORT ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

I. INTRODUCTORY (i. 1-12).

A. **Opening Salutation** (i. 1-2).

B. **Thanksgiving** (i. 3-10).

1. *For their spiritual growth* (i. 3).

(*a*) This thanksgiving is a duty.

(*b*) It is called forth by their faith and love.

2. *For their behaviour under persecution* (i. 4).

3. *For the hope that is laid up for them in heaven* (i. 5-10).

(*a*) The righteousness of God's judgment (i. 5-7).

(*b*) The occasion and attending circumstances of the judgment (i. 7-8).

(*c*) The judgment itself (i. 8-10), involving
1. vengeance for the ungodly,
2. glory for the saints.

C. **Prayer** (i. 11-12), that they may be "counted worthy."

II. DOCTRINAL (ii. 1-17).

Teaching concerning the Second Advent (ii. 1-17).

1. *The day of the Lord not at hand* (ii. 1-3).
   Exhortation to sober judgment and patient waiting.

2. *Events which will usher it in* (ii. 3-10).
   (*a*) The great Apostasy (ii. 3).
   (*b*) The revelation of the Man of Sin (ii. 3-5).
   (*c*) The restraining influence at work (ii. 6-7).
   (*d*) The end of the Man of Sin (ii. 8).
   (*e*) Further description of the Man of Sin (ii. 9-10).

3. *The fate of unbelievers* (ii. 10-12).
   (*a*) Their sin (ii. 10).
   (*b*) Its natural punishment (ii. 11-12).

4. *The happy contrast furnished by the Thessalonians themselves* (ii. 13-17), calling forth
   (*a*) Thanksgiving (ii. 13-14).
   (*b*) Exhortation (ii. 15).
   (*c*) Prayer (ii. 16-17).

III. HORTATORY (iii. 1-18).

A. The Apostle and his converts (iii. 1-5).

1. *The Apostle's appeal for their prayers* (iii. 1-2).
   (*a*) For the triumphant spread of the Gospel (iii. 1).

(*b*) For his own preservation from harm (iii. 2).

2. *The Apostle's confidence in his flock* (iii. 3-4).
   (*a*) That the Lord will do His part (iii. 3).
   (*b*) That they will do their part (iii. 4).
3. *The Apostle's prayer on their behalf* (iii. 5).

B. **Discipline in the Thessalonian Church** (iii. 6-15).
1. *Treatment of the idle and disorderly* (iii. 6-13).
2. *Treatment of the disobedient* (iii. 14-15).

C. **Conclusion** (iii. 16-18).
1. *A double benediction* (iii. 16).
2. *The Apostle's autograph and concluding blessing* (iii. 17-18).

DETAILED ANALYSIS.

The Revised Version is used throughout.

The large headings correspond with those of the Short Analysis, page 38.

The Epistle is sent in the name of St. Paul's companions as well as of St. Paul himself. For convenience, however, the singular number has been used throughout the Analysis.

I. INTRODUCTORY (i. 1-12).

I. A. OPENING SALUTATION (i. 1-2).

The Epistle is sent

1. **From** *Paul*,
   Silvanus,
   Timothy,

2. **to** the Church of the Thessalonians, confessing, and in union with
   God our Father,
   The Lord Jesus Christ,

3. **with** the Apostolic blessing;
   Grace,
   Peace, the fruit of grace;

   each the Apostle's earnest desire on their behalf, yet each alike the gift of
   God the Father, their ultimate source,
   The Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between the Father and man.

I. B. THANKSGIVING (i. 3-10).

A. For their spiritual growth (3).

1. *This thanksgiving a duty.*

   (*a*) Unceasing thanksgiving on behalf of his Thessalonian brethren discharges a debt of gratitude which the Apostle owes to God.

   (*b*) It is meet that this debt should be paid.

2. *Its cause.*
   (*a*) **Their faith**, which groweth exceedingly.
   (*b*) **Their love**, which is
      1. *universal*, each one pouring it forth to his brother man,
      2. *unstinted*—ever abounding.

B. For their behaviour under persecution (4).

1. *It is the Apostle's boast.* He and his companions glory in them in the churches of God.

2. *The cause.*
   (*a*) **Their patience**, which is the outcome of
   (*b*) **Their faith**,
   and which is being shown by them in
   (*a*) **Their persecutions**,
   (*b*) **Their afflictions generally.**

C. For the hope that is laid up for them in heaven (5-10).

1. *The righteousness of God's judgment* (5-7).
   (*a*) **As evidenced in their own experience** (5). Their patient endurance of suffering furnishes:
      1. *encouragement.* Their fortitude is itself Divinely given and shows that there must be a judgment to come.
      2. *discipline.* They are perfected through suffering, and so will be "counted worthy" of the kingdom.
      3. *hope.* For there is indeed a glorious kingdom of God to come, "for which they are suffering."
   (*b*) **As still more forcibly evidenced in the contrast between themselves and their persecutors** (6-7). In the "great judgment" hereafter *the conditions will be reversed.*
      1. *Such retribution is just.* All must admit that such a reversal of the present condition of things is certain if there be a righteous God.
      2. *The nature of the retribution.*
         1. Those that **afflict** here will **be afflicted** hereafter.
         2. Those that **suffer** here will **have rest** hereafter.
      3. *An added personal touch.* This **rest** they will share with the Apostle himself and his companions.

2. *The occasion and attending circumstances of the judgment* (7-8).

(*a*) **The Judge.** It is the *Lord Jesus, i.e.* the *God-Man.*

(*b*) **The occasion.** It is the *Parousia*—the day of the revelation of the Lord Jesus *from heaven.*

(*c*) **The accompaniments.**

1. *Glory*—it is a *revelation*, a glorious *Epiphany.*
2. *Attendant angels*—the ministers of His power.
3. *Flaming fire*—the sign of majesty.

3. *The Judgment itself* (8-10). It is twofold, as the Apostle has already said, involving:

(*a*) **Vengeance for the ungodly** (8-9).

1. *Justice will be full and complete.* It will be a "vengeance."
2. *It will cover all unbelievers.* There are **two classes**:
   (*a*) those (Gentiles) who wilfully remain in ignorance of God (see note);
   (*b*) those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, having heard the good tidings of our Lord Jesus, refuse to accept it.
3. *The sentence passed will be terrible.* Four things said of this judgment upon the ungodly:
   (*a*) It is **a punishment** for their wickedness.
   (*b*) It is **eternal.**
   (*c*) It consists in **banishment from God**, both
   from the face of the Lord,
   and from the glory of His might.
   (*d*) It is **accentuated by the contrast** it affords to the happiness of the saints.

(*b*) **Glory for the saints** (10). The glorious manifestation of Christ in the great day represented under two aspects:

1. *As being mirrored in the saints themselves*—"glorified in His saints" (see note).
2. *As being an object of wonder in consequence of His work on every believer*; and hence on the Thessalonians themselves, who had accepted the testimony of the Apostles concerning Christ.

I. C. PRAYER (i. 11, 12).

A. Characteristics of the Prayer (11).

1. *Its unvarying purpose.* That they may be counted worthy to receive blessing.

2. *The frequency of the prayer*—"always."

B. Substance of the Prayer (11, 12).

1. *The blessing prayed for.* That God may count them worthy of this great calling to His kingdom of glory, and to this end mightily accomplish ("fulfil in power") their moral and spiritual perfection, viz.:

(*a*) All that goodness could delight in.
(*b*) All that a living faith could achieve.

2. *What the blessing, if granted, will really mean*—mutual glorification of Saviour and saints.

(*a*) The name of our Lord Jesus glorified in them.
(*b*) They themselves glorified in Christ.

This resulting from no human power, but of the Divine Grace, viz., of

(*a*) Our God (the Father) . . . *its source.*
(*b*) The Lord Jesus Christ . . . *Who wins it for man.*

II. DOCTRINAL (ii. 1–17).

TEACHING CONCERNING THE TIME OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

A. The Day of the Lord not at hand (1-3).

Earnest appeal to the Thessalonians not to be carried away by false ideas concerning the Second Coming.

1. *The grounds of the appeal* (1). The Apostle bases his

appeal on the very glory of that great event, in its twofold aspect, viz.:

(*a*) **the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

(*b*) **the gathering together of the elect**—quick and dead—to meet Him.

2. *The appeal itself* (2).

(*a*) **To sober judgment.** Not to be so quickly driven from their sober senses by feverish expectation.

(*b*) **To patient watching.** Not to let the even course of their lives be disturbed by a constant condition of unrest.

3. *The necessity for the appeal* (2). This feverish expectation and unrest has been caused by deceivers, who have claimed three sources of authority for their false teaching:

(*a*) **Spirit**—pretended manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power and revelation;

(*b*) **Word**—utterances by word of mouth, *possibly* reported as the Apostle's own;

(*c*) **Epistle**—forged writings, purporting to be from the Apostle and his companions;

each alike declaring the Day of the Lord to be *now present* —not only *near* but actually *upon us.*

4. *The appeal repeated* (3). Whatever the means employed by those who would beguile them, let them not be carried away.

B. **Events which will usher it in** (8-10). So far from the Day of the Lord being "upon us," the very foundations of the church will be threatened before Christ comes.

1. *The great Apostasy* (3). There must first come

(*a*) **the falling away**—a great revolt amongst those in the Church of Christ, this Apostasy having its culmination in the revelation of

(*b*) **the Man of Sin,** who is spoken of, however, as even now in existence.

2. *The revelation of the Man of Sin* (3-5). Four points mentioned with regard to him:

(*a*) **His extreme depravity** (3). He is so completely identified with lawlessness that he is emphatically "*the Man of Sin.*"

(*b*) **The completeness of his fall from grace** (3). His present (see Note on II. 4) state so certainly ensures future judgment that he is "*the son of perdition.*"

(*c*) **His direct antagonism to everything reverenced by man** (4). He both

1. opposeth himself against
2. exalteth himself above (but see note)

everything man worships; whether:

1. *God*—the true God of the Christian, or the false gods of the heathen,

or even

2. *sacred things*—all objects of reverence.

(*d*) **His pretentious claim to Divinity** (4).

1. He sits in the Sanctuary of God.
2. He proclaims himself to be God.

The Apostle reminds the Thessalonians that while he was with them he told them of these things (5).

3. *The restraining influence* (6, 7). The Apostle explains why it is that this revelation has not yet taken place.

(*a*) **There is a restraining influence at work** (6). This is already in the Thessalonians' knowledge.

1. They know that there is this great restraining power.
2. They know that it will prevent the Man of Sin being revealed before his proper, destined season.

(*b*) **The evil, therefore, is present though not revealed** (7). "The mystery of lawlessness doth already work."

(*c*) **The revelation is, however, certain** (7).

1. At present there is this restraining influence.
2. But this is only until the time shall have come for the revelation and destruction of the Man of Sin.

4. *The end of the Man of Sin* (8). There will be

(*a*) **First, the revelation.** When the restraining influence is removed the "lawless one" will be revealed.

(*b*) **Next, destruction.**

1. *The destroyer.* The Lord Jesus, at His Coming.
2. *The work of the destroyer.* There will be accompanying manifestations of Divine power. This is presented under two figures:
   (*a*) The Lord Jesus will *slay* with the *breath of His mouth.*
   (*b*) He will *bring to nought* by the *glorious manifestation of His Coming.*

5. *Further description of the Man of Sin* (9, 10). The Antichrist, like the true Christ Whose place he would usurp, has

(*a*) **An Advent**—a terrible parody of the Parousia of Christ.

(*b*) **A higher authority behind him**, but with the Man of Sin it is Satan, with Christ it is God.

(*c*) **Accompanying manifestations of power.** *Like* the miracles of Christ, they may be viewed in three lights, viz.: as
1. *power*, when considered with relation to the doer of the miracle;
2. *signs*, in their effect upon the faith of those who see them;
3. *wonders*, in their effect upon the emotions.

But *unlike* the Divine miracles, they are all based upon falsehood.

Like Christ also,

(*d*) **He would fain draw all to himself**, but it is
1. by *deceit* as against *truth*,
2. of *unrighteousness* as against *holiness*,
3. bringing *perdition* as against *life.*

C. **The fate of unbelievers** (10-12). Wilful persistence in sin brings its own sure and natural punishment.

1. *The sin* (10). Obstinate indifference, or deliberate antagonism to everything good. Viewed under two aspects:

(*a*) **Hardness of heart.** They had no love of, or desire for, *the truth.*

(*b*) **Refusal of the means of grace.** They had no desire for *their own salvation.*

2. *The natural punishment* (11, 12). Twofold, like the sin.

(*a*) **Blindness of heart** (11). The eye that wilfully refuses to see becomes at last unable to see. Three points noted:

1. This is part of God's moral government of the world.
2. The heart wilfully and willingly deceived finds the "workings of error" multiply.
3. Persistent refusal to receive truth ends in deliberate acceptance of falsehood.

(*b*) **Future condemnation** (12). All will be *judged* for their double offence, viz.:

1. Obstinate disbelief.
2. Pleasure in unrighteousness.

D. **The happy contrast furnished by the Thessalonians themselves** (13-17), which calls forth from the Apostle:

1. *Thanksgiving* (13, 14).

(*a*) **The thanksgiving itself** (13). It is

1. an obvious duty,
2. unceasingly rendered,
3. on their behalf, who are
   brethren of the Apostle,
   beloved of the Lord Jesus.

(*b*) **Its occasion**—the constant thought of **their election by God** (13, 14). This Divine election considered in its three stages:

1. *God's predestination* (13).
   It was *a deliberate choice* on God's part.
   It was *from all eternity.*
   It was an election *to salvation* (see note) with its accompanying necessary conditions:
   (*a*) sanctification by the Holy Spirit,
   (*b*) reception of the great truths of Christianity.
2. *The actual call* (14).
   Its purpose . . . their salvation. "Whereunto."
   Its Divine agent . . . God.
   The instrumental means . . . The preaching of the Gospel by St. Paul and his companions.
3. *The future consummation.*
   The obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *Exhortation* (15). "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

(*a*) **Generally.** "Stand fast," resist all these temptations of the Man of Sin.

(*b*) **Specifically.** Hold firmly all the doctrine which has been handed on to you by us, God's messengers, whether

1. by the spoken word,
2. by Epistle.

3. *Prayer* (16, 17).

(*a*) **To whom addressed** (16).

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
2. God, our Father.

(*b*) **The grounds of the appeal.** It is based on the fact that the Father has given them

1. His love,
2. His never-failing comfort,
3. sure hope for the future,

and all through His own Divine grace.

(*c*) **The appeal itself** (17). It is twofold, viz. that the Father and Son will

1. comfort their hearts,
2. stablish them in every detail of their spiritual lives:
   not merely in their *works*,
   but also in their very *words*.

III. HORTATORY (iii. 1-18).

A. The Apostle and his converts (1-5).

1. *The Apostle's appeal for their prayers* (1-2).

(*a*) **For the triumphant spread of the Gospel** (1). He entreats them to pray that the Word of the Lord may

1. rapidly spread,
2. be everywhere received with honour.

He reminds them of its triumphant course in Thessalonica.

(*b*) **For his own preservation from harm** (2). That he and his companions may be delivered from those who are

1. perverse, unreasonable,
2. evil.

He reminds them that all have not *the faith* (i.e. *have not received the Gospel*, so R.V. marg.).

2. *The Apostle's confidence in his flock* (3-4). He is confident

(*a*) **That** THE LORD **will do** HIS **part** (3).

1. He is faithful.
2. He will, therefore,
   stablish them, fix them firmly in the faith;
   guard them from the assaults of the Evil One.

(*b*) **That** THEY **will do** THEIR **part** (4), (this expression of the Apostle's confidence predisposing them to carry out his subsequent commands).

1. His trust in them is closely bound up with his trust in the Lord.
2. He is confident
   that they are carrying out,
   that they will carry out in future,
   his injunctions to them.

3. *The Apostle's prayer on their behalf* (5). The Apostle prays that the Lord will *remove all spiritual obstacles* and so direct their hearts into

(*a*) **the love of God;**

(*b*) **the patient endurance** which was so beautifully exemplified in the person of Christ.

B. Discipline in the Thessalonian Church (6-15).

1. *Treatment of the idle and disorderly* (6-13).

(*a*) **The Apostle's right to command** (6). There is a twofold consideration:

1. They are *his brethren.*
2. They have *a common brotherhood in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(*b*) **The treatment he would enjoin** (6). *The withdrawing of themselves* from every disorderly member of the flock. The evil viewed in two lights:

1. *in itself*—disorderly behaviour, insubordination;
2. *in its relation to Christian teaching*—as not being in accordance with what the Apostle and his companions had preached to them.

(*c*) **His own example** (7-10).

1. *The duty of the taught to imitate the teacher* (7).
   They know this of themselves.

2. *The example set by the teacher* (7-8), stated
negatively. There was *no disorderly behaviour.*
There was *no idle dependence* upon others for support.
positively. There was:
very hard work—"labour and travail"
night and day
to avoid becoming a burdensome charge.

3 *The teacher's motive* (9-10), which was evident
(*a*) *in act*, all this being
not
because he had no right to their aid,
but
to present an example for their imitation.
(*b*) *in word*, his command being that there should be no false charity towards those who were unwilling to work.

(*d*) **The extent of the evil at Thessalonica** (11). There were members of the Church who were guilty of disorderly conduct amongst the brethren, as shown
negatively—in the neglect of honourable labour,
positively—in the officious interference with the concerns of others.

(*e*) **The Apostle's exhortation** (12, 13).
1. *To the disorderly* (12). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ he
commands, as their spiritual leader,
entreats, as their friend
that they will give themselves to
honest labour,
orderly conduct,
dependence on themselves and not on others.
2. *To the rest of the flock* (13).
To persevere with unwearying patience in their present honourable conduct.

2. *Treatment of the disobedient* (14, 15).

(*a*) **The offence** (14). Disregard of the instructions conveyed in this Epistle.

(*b*) **Its punishment.** The offender should be
1. noted,
2. denied the company of the faithful.

(*c*) **The object of the punishment.** *Reform, not rejection.*
It is, in other words,
that the offender may be brought to shame.
Hence the faithful are warned:
1. *not* to treat the offender *as an enemy,*
2. *but* to advise and warn him *as a brother.*

C. Conclusion (16-18).

1. *A double benediction* (16).

(*a*) **Pax vobiscum.** May the Lord of Peace Himself give them peace:
1. at all times,
2. in all ways.

(*b*) **Dominus vobiscum.** May the Lord be with them all.

2. *The Apostle's autograph and concluding blessing* (17, 18).

(*a*) **The autograph** (17).
1. He greets them in his own name.
2. He writes this with his own hand.
3. He gives this token as a mark of genuineness in every Epistle.

(*b*) **The concluding blessing** (18).
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

PRINCIPAL ALTERATIONS IN THE REVISED VERSION,

WITH BRIEF NOTES ON THE TEXT.

PRINCIPAL ALTERATIONS IN THE REVISED VERSION.

CHAPTER I.

A.V.	R.V.
	[*The phrases correspond to the italicised portions of the text.*]
1. Paul, and Silvanus, and *Timotheus*, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:	Timothy

BRIEF NOTES ON THE TEXT.

MANY of the difficulties of the Text have been explained in the detailed Analysis, which the student is strongly recommended to read side by side with the following notes, and with the principal alterations made in the Revised Version and emphasized on the pages opposite the notes.

1. It will be noticed that the opening verses of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians are almost identical with those of the First.

1. **Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.** (Cf. 1 Thess. i. 1.) There was a double reason for St. Paul's association of Silvanus and Timotheus with himself:

(*a*) They were with him at Corinth at the time of writing (cf. Acts xviii. 5). See also p. 17.

(*b*) They had co-operated with him in preaching the Word in Thessalonica (cf. Acts xvii. 4 and 14).

It was St. Paul's usual practice to associate with himself, in the opening greeting of his Epistles, prominent Christians who were labouring with him at the time (*e.g.* Sosthenes in 1 Cor., Timothy in 2 Cor., etc.). Usually the body of the Epistle is written in the first person singular (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 2, *I* praise you, brethren, etc.). In the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, however, the names mentioned are of those whose share in establishing the Macedonian Churches was second only to that of St. Paul himself; the plural number is kept up, therefore, almost throughout the Epistles.

Silvanus is placed before Timotheus since:

(*a*) Timotheus was young (Acts xvi. 3; cf. also 1 Tim. iv. 12); whereas Silvanus would appear to have been about St. Paul's own age.

(*b*) Timothy was but recently called to active Christian work; Silas was already prominent in the Church, being "a prophet" (Acts xv. 32).

(*c*) Silas took a more active part in the mission work in Macedonia.

This precedence of Silas is to be noticed also in the Acts (*e.g.* xvii. 14).

1 (*repeated*). Paul, and Silvanus, and *Timotheus*, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Timothy

Paul. In most of his later Epistles St. Paul is at some pains to assert the dignity of his Apostolic call. Here, as in the First Epistle, his name stands alone, without any qualifying title, possibly because

(*a*) His relations with the Thessalonians were of a particularly *personal* character (cf. 1 Thess. ii. 7).

(*b*) The title could hardly have been extended in this official sense to his two companions (cf. however, 1 Thess. ii. 6).

Silvanus, the **Silas** of the Acts (see p. 29).

Timotheus, *i.e.* **Timothy.** For Timothy's connection with the Apostle, see p. 30.

It may be added that Timothy is associated with St. Paul in the opening words of six Epistles, viz. :

(*a*) Epistles of the first group : 1 Thess., 2 Thess.

(*b*) ,, ,, second group : 2 Cor.

(*c*) ,, ,, first captivity : Phil., Col., Philem.

Two Epistles, moreover, are addressed to him, the second of which was written shortly before the Apostle's death. He is also mentioned in the concluding instructions and salutations of 1 Cor. and Romans. He was evidently, therefore, in constant communication with St. Paul from the time of his circumcision to the close of the Apostle's life.

unto the church of the Thessalonians. St. Paul's style of address varies in his Epistles. The variation is a useful chronological mark. The several characteristic addresses are :

(*a*) In the earliest Epistles : To the Church *of the Thessalonians* (*i.e.* named from the converts themselves).

(*b*) In Epistles somewhat later : To the Churches *of Galatia* ; the Church of God which is *at Corinth* (*i.e.* embracing a whole district).

(*c*) In the latest Epistles : To *the saints* at Philippi, the *saints and faithful brethren* at Colosse (the address becoming thus more personal).

the church. Gk. *ecclesia*, the ordinary word for the "assembly" (*i.e.* lit. a body of men *called out*). Hence, in its sacred use, the word denotes a body of men "called out" from the world for the service of God. The word sometimes denotes *the whole body of professing Christians* (Col. i. 18), and sometimes (as here) *a particular section of that body.* (Cf. also The Church of God . . . at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 2.)

in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only in the two Thessalonian Epistles that this phrase is applied to the Church. The Church is *in* the Father and the Son, since :

(*a*) Its members were baptized into the Name of the Trinity.

2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	the
3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, *as* it is meet, *because* that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;	even as, for love

(*b*) It confesses that Name.

(*c*) It is in living union with Christ its Head (Col. ii. 19).

Notice that it is here "in God *our* Father." In the First Epistle it is simply "in God *the* Father."

2. **Grace unto you, and peace.** St. Paul's usual opening benediction. In the Epistles to Timothy, written towards the close of his life, he adds the word *mercy*.

Grace means (1) love that condescends,
(2) the gifts which such love bestows,
(3) the effects of those gifts in beautifying character.

from God our Father. . . . These words (to the end of the verse) are of very doubtful authority in the First Epistle. Here they are undoubtedly genuine. They usually accompany the benediction in St. Paul's Epistles.

3. **We,** *i.e.* Paul, Silas, and Timothy. St. Paul, in his Epistles, seems never to have used the plural when speaking of himself alone. In the present Epistle, when the character of the sentence actually demands it, he changes to the singular (cf. ii. 5, iii. 17). It is the same in the First Epistle, where, in fact, he corrects himself on one occasion for having inadvertently used the plural (ii. 18). Generally speaking, however, he associates his two companions with himself (see note on ver. 1).

We are bound to thank God always for you. St. Paul's usual practice in his Epistles is to commence the actual letter (after the opening salutation) with a thanksgiving to God for the spiritual progress of the Church to which he is writing, even when (as at Corinth) the progress is not all he could have wished. The only exception is the Epistle to the Galatians, since in Galatia everything was disappointing. The thanksgiving here (as in *1 Thessalonians* and *Philippians*) is unusually fervent:

(*a*) He looks upon it as an obvious duty.
"We are bound . . . as it is meet."

(*b*) It is ever present in his mind.
"always."

(*c*) There is Christian progress in each individual Thessalonian.
"every one of you all."

(*d*) The Church is the Apostle's pride.
"we ourselves glory in you."

(*e*) He sees in its patience under affliction a token of God's judgment to come.
"a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God."

are bound . . . as it is meet. The two expressions are not identical in meaning. The first recognizes the moral obligation to thank God;

3 (*repeated*). We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, *as* it is meet, *because* that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

even as
for
love

the second appreciates the worthiness of the cause. Lightfoot happily quotes here the words of our Holy Communion service:

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty."

your faith . . . charity. In the First Epistle St. Paul enumerates the three great Christian virtues, *faith, love, and hope* (1 Thess. i. 3). Here he mentions specifically two—*faith* and *love*. The third—*hope*—is here implied in *patience*, which is, however, associated (in verse 4) with *faith*. In the First Epistle, patience is associated with *hope*.

your faith groweth exceedingly. A strong expression in the original, denoting exuberant growth. The metaphor is taken from the organic growth of the animal or vegetable world.

In the First Epistle St. Paul offers thanks to God for their "work of faith," but there was then something lacking, something which needed perfecting:

1 Thess. iii. 10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

It had been his chief anxiety when he sent Timothy from Corinth to Thessalonica before the First Epistle was written.

1 Thess. iii. 2-3. . . . sent Timotheus . . . to comfort you concerning your faith: that no man should be moved by these afflictions.

Now the Apostle rejoices that so far from their faith being weakened by persecution and affliction it "groweth exceedingly." The Thessalonians have come out of trial "more than conquerors."

charity, R.V. "love." Faith and love, in the eyes of the Apostle, are inseparable. Each finds its complement in the other. Faith worketh by love; love strengthens faith by giving it scope for healthy exercise.

of every one of you all. This strong expression is interesting as pointing to three things:

1. *St. Paul's intimate knowledge of each individual member of his flock.* Cf. also

   1 Thess. ii. 11. We exhorted and comforted and charged *every one of you*.

   Acts xx. 31. I ceased not to warn *every one* night and day with tears.

2. *The fulness of the report which he had received from Thessalonica*, treating, as it did, of the individual members as well as of the Church as a whole.

3. *The improvement since the First Epistle was written.* Then it was his special prayer that their love might abound.

4. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and *tribulations* that ye endure:

in the afflictions

1 Thess. iii. 12. The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men. Cf. also **1 Thess. iv. 10.**

Now he rejoices that his prayer is heard, and that the love which was formerly a little cramped and confined, is being poured forth freely and generously.

4. **we ourselves glory.** There is an emphasis here on the expression "we ourselves" which is easily explained:

(*a*) It was against the Apostle's practice to glory in his Churches, lest such glorying might seem like self-praise.

2 Cor. xii. 1. It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory.

But there were exceptions to his general rule. Cf. 2 Cor. ix. 2.

(*b*) In this case, for example, wherever he went, he found others already informed of the great work done at Thessalonica.

1 Thess. i. 8. In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.

(*c*) And the Church was progressing in spite of certain misgivings of the Apostle (1 Thess. iv. 10, etc.).

(*d*) Moreover, it was a stimulus to the young Church to feel the pride its founders had in it.

glory in you in the churches of God.

(*a*) Principally, in the Churches of Achaia (round about Corinth) where he had laboured since leaving Thessalonica.

(*b*) But, also, indirectly, by letter or otherwise, in distant Churches like those of Judæa. (Cf. 1 Thess. i. 8).

patience and faith. Patience = "enduring constancy," "heroic endurance under trial."

In his Epistles generally, St. Paul gives patience as the right and natural accompaniment of hope (1 Thess. i. 3); in Romans (xv. 4) hope is born of patience; in 2 Timothy (iii. 10) patience takes the place of hope. (See also note on v. 3.)

Here patience is connected with faith, since faith begets and sustains hope, and hope inspires patience.

persecutions and tribulations, R.V. "persecutions and . . . afflictions". The second expression is the more general.

afflictions = tribulations of any kind.

persecutions = hostile attempts of the enemies of Christianity.

that ye endure, *i.e.* at the present time, referring to the ordinary daily experience of the Church, and not, as in the First Epistle (i. 6) to the persecutions when he himself was with them at Thessalonica.

5. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, *that* ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

to the end that

5. which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God. It is a little doubtful as to what the Apostle considers to be the 'manifest token.' Either

(*a*) *their being persecuted.* If this be the proper antecedent, St. Paul means that the very fact of their being afflicted is itself an indication that there is a righteous judgment to come. That is the only possible way of explaining such an apparent anomaly as the suffering of the righteous at the hand of the wicked. At least it is the only way *if there be a righteous God.*

Or (*b*) *their patience under persecution.* In this case the Apostle would imply that all suffering does not necessarily point to a righteous judgment to come, but that the heroic endurance of the Christian under persecution, confident as he is of the existence of a God Who is just, is itself an argument that there will be retribution hereafter.

In either case the general teaching is the same. The Judge of all the earth will do right. The balance will be struck hereafter, and a prophetic sign of a Day of Reckoning in the future is the patient endurance of suffering and persecution in the present. A somewhat similar line of thought is followed by Browning in *Abt Vogler*:—

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days?"

that ye may be counted worthy. Those who have patiently suffered for the truth's sake will, hereafter, be declared by the righteous Judge worthy to enter His heavenly kingdom. Cf.

Rev. vii. 13. What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? . . . These are they which came out of *great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, etc. . . . *Therefore* are they before the throne of God.

"We find continual mention of worthiness in Holy Scripture, which, while it does not ignore the grace of God (in the right use and employment of which indeed it really consists), recognizes and stimulates the personal responsibility of man" (Bishop Thorold). Cf. Rev. iii. 4.

of the kingdom of God. "The 'Kingdom of God' is the new order of things as established under Christ" (Lightfoot).

1. Sometimes the reference is specially to *Christ's Church upon earth.* Cf.

St. Luke vii. 28. He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he (*i.e.* John the Baptist).

Greater, that is, in Christian privileges, opportunities, revelation, sacramental means of grace. Cf. also St. John iii. 5, Acts i. 3.

6. *Seeing* it is a righteous thing with God to recompense *tribulation* to them that *trouble* you;	if so be that affliction afflict
7. And to you who are *troubled* rest with us, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed* from heaven with *his mighty angels*,	afflicted at the revelation of the Lord Jesus the angels of his power (*comma omitted*)

2. Sometimes the reference (as here) is more particularly to the *future glorious kingdom*, the Church in its final development. Cf.

Rev. xii. 10. Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.

3. Generally, however, both stages in the development of Christ's Church are implied in the New Testament use of the expression 'Kingdom of God.' Cf.

St. Luke iv. 43. I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also.

4. Occasionally the phrase denotes *the rule of Christ in the heart.* Cf.

St. Luke xvii. 21. The kingdom of God is within you. See also St. Mk. x. 15.

The *kingdom of God* formed an important part of St. Paul's teaching at Thessalonica. Cf.

Acts xvii. 7. These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

for which. Not merely "to obtain which," but "on behalf of which." All faithful endurance of persecution helps forward the work and adds to the glory of Christ's Church. Cf.

Phil. i. 20. Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

6. **Seeing it is a righteous thing,** etc. R.V. "If so be that it is," as, I am sure, you will all readily admit.

The righteous judgment of God involves "the law of compensation by which the sufferers of this world shall rest hereafter, and the persecutors of this world shall suffer hereafter. But the simple suffering does not in itself constitute a claim to future joy. The suffering must come of faith. The sufferer must endure for the kingdom of God's sake." (Lightfoot, who illustrates the same teaching from our Lord's parable of Dives and Lazarus, St. Luke xvi. 25, "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.")

7. **you that are troubled.** R.V. "You that are afflicted."

rest, =relief, relaxation. Affliction hereafter for those who afflict here; rest hereafter for those who are afflicted here.

with us, *i.e.* with the Apostle and his companions. "We have *suffered* together, we shall *rest* together hereafter."

St. Paul frequently reminds his disciples that they are fellow-sufferers with him, and with Christ. Cf. Rom. viii. 17, 2 Cor. i. 7, Phil. i. 30, 2 Tim. ii. 12. He frequently reminds them also that this suffering means future joy. Cf. 2 Tim. ii. 12, 2 Cor. i. 7, Rom. viii. 17 just quoted.

8. In flaming *fire taking vengeance on* them that know not God, and *that* obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus *Christ*:	fire, rendering vengeance to (*notice comma*) to them that *omit*

when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed. Notice that, according to St. Paul, *rest* comes when *Christ* comes in the last Great Day. The rest of the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, (see Job iii. 17) is to St. Paul merely the rest of sleep. (Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 14, "Them also which sleep in Jesus.") *The* rest of the people of God begins when they are awakened from this sleep and caught up together with their Lord in the clouds.

the Lord Jesus=the God-Man.

revealed, *i.e.* at the Second Advent. Notice the accompaniments of this great revelation of Christ:

(*a*) It is from heaven.

(*b*) It is with the angels of His power in flaming fire. (See note on i. 8).

(*c*) It brings retribution to the unrighteous, and glorification of the Lord in His saints.

(*d*) All believers will marvel at this glorious exhibition of Divine Power.

with his mighty angels. Notice the alteration in the R.V. In nearly all the detailed descriptions of the Second Coming angels figure as attendants upon Christ. Cf.

St. Matt. xxiv. 31. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, etc.

1 Thess. iv. 16. With the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

St. Matt. xxv. 31. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.

The angels are not merely His companions, but the ministers of His power.

8. **In flaming fire.** It is a question whether these words should be taken with what precedes, *i.e.* "revealed with the angels of his power" (as in R.V.), or with what follows, *i.e.* "taking vengeance" (as in A.V.). The former would make the fire *an addition to the glory* of His appearing (cf. Dan. vii. 9), the latter would represent it as *the instrument of His vengeance*.

The latter seems, perhaps, the more natural interpretation, though, of course, there is no allusion to hell-fire. It is similar in meaning to the phrase in ii. 8 (R.V.), "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth." The very glory of His appearing becomes the instrument for punishing the unrighteous.

taking vengeance on. Not "taking revenge upon," but "awarding retribution to."

9. Who shall *be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence* of the Lord, and from the glory of his *power*;

suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face

might,

them that know not God and obey not, etc. R.V. "to them that know not . . . and to them that obey not." Two classes of evil-doers are here denoted:

(*a*) *Them that know not God*, possibly **Gentiles** who have never heard the Gospel. Their sin consists in their rejecting the light of natural religion which God offers to all, heathen as well as privileged Jew or Christian Gentile (Rom. i. 19, 20).

(*b*) *Them that obey not*, etc. Whether **Jews or Gentiles,** who, having had the Gospel preached to them, refuse to accept it.

obey not the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ fulfils a double purpose:

(*a*) It *tells of Christ*, and exacts *faith.*

(*b*) It *reveals man's duty*, and compels *obedience.*

9. **Who shall be punished,** etc. Notice the different reading of the Revised Version. With regard to the future punishment of evil-doers, St. Paul mentions two important facts. (See also Analysis.)

(*a*) *It will be everlasting.* Sadler notices that this is the only occasion where everlasting destruction is mentioned in the Epistles of St. Paul. The absence of hope seems to be implied, however, in Phil. iii. 19, "whose *end* is destruction."

Many Christians have found it hard to reconcile the idea of the eternal punishment of the wicked with the conception of God as a God of love. The two are certainly difficult to reconcile, probably because our knowledge of God and of the life to come are limited by our finite faculties. And yet (as in the similar difficulty of reconciling man's free-will with God's predestination) the two seem equally clear from Holy Scripture. For, while there is abundant revelation of God as a God of infinite love, there is also a constant reference to the judgment to be passed upon the wicked as *eternal.* The same adjective is used as in the phrase "eternal life," which occurs more than forty times in the N.T. It seems impossible to limit it in the case of punishment, and yet to give it its full meaning in the case of reward. Moreover, there is no passage in Holy Scripture which would suggest any change in the condition of the wicked after judgment has once been passed. Such parables as the Ten Virgins, the Marriage of the King's Son, would certainly imply that judgment once passed was final.

(*b*) *It consists in banishment from the presence of God.* They are for ever removed from the face of the Lord, and they are deprived also of the sight of that great glory which Christ will

10. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be *admired* in all them that *believe* (because our testimony *among* you was believed) in that day.

marvelled at
believed
unto

have in His saints. While the joyous anticipation of the believer was that he would be *for ever with the Lord* (1 Thess. iv. 17), the fate of the unbeliever was to be *for ever banished from the Lord.* The unhappiness of the lost will arise, therefore, from moral and spiritual rather than from physical suffering—the anguish of remorse for having wilfully rejected the Christ from Whom now they are banished.

It remains to be added that St. Paul's teaching is the same as that of his Divine Master. Cf.

(*a*) *The punishment everlasting,*

St. Mark ix. 48. Their worm *dieth not.*

St. Matt. xxv. 46 (R.V.). These shall go away into *eternal* punishment.

(*b*) *and consisting of banishment from God.*

St. Matt. xxv. 41. *Depart from me,* ye cursed.

St. Matt. xxii. 13. Cast him into *outer darkness.*

destruction, not *annihilation, i.e.* actual extinction of being, but *ruin,* loss of all that made life happy.

the glory of his power; In the R.V. the semi-colon is replaced by a comma, since the phrase is to be used in connection with what follows. (See next note but one.)

10. **When he shall come.** "The seasons of the Christian year are represented variously in St. Paul's writings. The breath of *Advent-tide* blows about the *First* Epistle to the Thessalonians" (Speaker on 1 Thess. i. 10). This is true also of the Second Epistle, whose main purpose has reference to the Second Coming of Christ. That Coming is specifically mentioned five times, i. 7, 10; ii. 1, 2, 8. See also i. 5; ii. 3, 14; iii. 5, where there are indirect references to it.

to be glorified in his saints. That is, at once, the *object* and the *result* of His coming. Even now, Christ is glorified in the faithful members of His Church, since

(*a*) they make His glory known,

(*b*) they help to add to the greatness of His kingdom,

(*c*) their holiness of life is a sign of His power, since He sends the Spirit.

Cf. **St. John xvii. 10.** And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

2 Cor. viii. 23. Our brethren . . . are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

But in the last Great Day this will be true in a special sense. In that one supreme moment when the glory of "ten thousand times ten

10 (*repeated*). When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be *admired* in all them that *believe* (because our testimony *among* you was believed) in that day.

marvelled at believed
unto

thousand" saints is fully and for ever assured, the divine power of the Christ, Whose great act of redemption has brought it all about, will be fully revealed. The saints will be "the mirror in which Christ's glory shines." Their glory is His, since

(*a*) all that they are He has made them,

(*b*) their goodness is but a reflex of His own.

saints . . . all them that believe. Either

(*a*) *Two ways of contemplating the same* (so Mason);

saints = people consecrated to God, *as opposed to those who know not God* (v. 8),

believers = people who accept the Gospel, *as opposed to those who obey not* (v. 8);

or (*b*) *The second term more general than the first* (so Bengel);

saints = those exceptionally holy,

believers = all nominally accepting the Gospel—the whole body of Christians, among whom the saints would be an inner circle.

It may be mentioned, however, that it is against St. Paul's usual practice to restrict thus the meaning of the word saints. Cf. 1 Cor. i. 2, where all are "sanctified," and yet (*ib.* v. 12) the whole Church was divided and disorganised.

to be admired, R.V. "to be marvelled at." The great happiness of the saints and believers in that last Day will not only add glory to Christ, but will lead all to marvel at the greatness of His divine power.

in all them that believe, not "*by* all them," but "*in* all them." Just as Christ's glory was mirrored *in* His saints, so His marvellous power is to be seen *in His work on those who believe in Him.*

because our testimony, etc. Added, parenthetically, to show the share which the Thessalonians will have in it all. "Christ will be marvelled at in all who believe, and consequently in you Thessalonians, since our testimony unto you was believed when we came preaching the Gospel."

was believed. The past tense is used since it was at the moment when they accepted the Gospel that they could first venture to hope for a share in the glory of Christ's coming.

in that day. These words are to be connected with the commencing words of the verse. It is

not (*a*) our testimony was believed in that day,

but (*b*) when He shall come . . . in that day.

11. *Wherefore* also we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil *all the good pleasure of his goodness*, and *the* work of faith with power:

To which end

your, every desire of goodness every

11. **Wherefore**, R.V. "To which end."

we also pray. We thank God (vv. 3-5) that He has called you, and that your faith and love give promise of your making your calling and election sure; but it is our constant prayer nevertheless—nay, just because God *has* done great things for us already—that you may go on unto perfection, and share in that final heavenly calling of which the earthly call is but the initial stage and forecast.

may count you worthy, an echo of verse 5, but now in the form of prayer. The Apostle does not pray that they may *be* worthy (which is impossible), but that they may be *accounted* worthy, through the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

your calling, *i.e.* your calling at the last Day to a share in the heavenly kingdom and glory. Cf.

> **1 Thess. ii. 12.** That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

They had their first call of God when they heard of the Gospel at the mouth of St. Paul (1 Thess. i. 4-5). But the consummation of this would be hereafter, in the great call of the day of Christ's coming. There was a danger lest some who responded to the first call might fall from grace, and hence not be counted worthy of the second. Hence the Apostle's prayer.

fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness. This a difficult phrase, and has been variously interpreted. The most important differences of interpretation are embodied in the A.V. and R.V. renderings.

(*a*) A.V. (as above) inserts 'his,' *i.e. the good pleasure of God's goodness.* This would signify the prayer that God would bestow on them everything that His goodness delights in.

(*b*) R.V. "every desire of goodness," *i.e. every desire prompted by the goodness of the Thessalonians.* This would seem to be suggested by the next phrase, "the work of faith," and would denote a prayer that God would so bless them as to enable them to obtain every desire which their goodness could call forth, and to perform every good work which their faith might long to achieve. In other words, it is a prayer for moral and spiritual growth unto perfection.

The R.V. rendering seems the more probable, although the word translated "good pleasure" is usually associated with God.

work of faith. It is to be noticed how frequently St. Paul associates faith and works. Like St. James, he holds that "Faith without works is dead" (St. James ii. 26).

12. That the name of our Lord Jesus *Christ* may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

omit

CHAPTER II.

12. **The name of our Lord Jesus.** "The name of the Lord" (occasionally "The name" alone) is used in the Old Testament as denoting Jehovah, "implying the idea of title, dignity, majesty, power, rather than personality" (Lightfoot). Cf.

"Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name?"
—Browning.

Here it is applied to our Lord, with the same underlying idea of majesty and power. Cf.

Phil. ii. 9. God . . . hath given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

may be glorified in you. In v. 10 the Apostle dwells upon the fact that Christ will be glorified in His saints. He now prays that this may be true specially of the Thessalonians themselves.

and ye in him. This is the secondary object of the prayer. First, Christ glorified in them; second, they glorified in Christ. "As the holiness of His people brings glory to Christ, so the glory of Christ makes them glorious" (Speaker).

The language recalls the prayer of Christ in St. John xvii., "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (v. 1); "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee" (v. 21), etc.

according to the grace, etc. For the word "grace," see note on i. 1. This happy consummation arises, says St. Paul, from no merit of our own. It all springs from the grace of

(*a*) God the Father, the Giver of all,

(*b*) The Lord Jesus Christ, Who wins it for man.

CHAPTER II.

1-12. The Apostle appeals earnestly to his Thessalonian converts not to be driven from their sober senses, nor even to be reduced to a state of unrest through mistaken ideas concerning the time at which Christ should come. There were those who were deceiving them by pretended spiritual manifestations, and even by a claim to Apostolic authority. Such false teachers asserted that the Day of the Lord was even now upon them. But the Apostle's previous instruction ought to have put them on their guard against this. As he had told them when yet with them, there was good reason to believe that while the Day might possibly not be far off, it was at any rate not imminent. It was all, of course, uncertain, but there was much to happen before the Day came. There would be

1. Now we beseech you, brethren, *by* the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto *him*,

touching (*marg. Gr.* in behalf of) *marg. Gr.* presence *omit*, him;

2. *That* ye be not *soon shaken in mind*, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by *letter* as from us, as that the day of *Christ* is *at hand*.

To the end that quickly shaken from your mind. epistle the Lord, now present

a great apostasy ("the falling away") in the Church itself, and there would be the revelation of Antichrist ("the Man of Sin"). Some time was clearly demanded for this. At present there was a withholding influence at work which prevented this double manifestation of evil. The Thessalonians well knew what this restraining influence was. But, although as yet kept in check, the mystery of lawlessness was already working. It would not, however, go on perpetually thus. The restraint would be removed, the great Apostasy would be an accomplished fact, and *then* Christ would come, and the revelation and destruction of the Man of Sin and of his following would be achieved.

1. **beseech**, *i.e.* "entreat." The Apostle, who has a right to *charge*, rather *implores* as a brother.

by the coming, R.V. "touching the coming," *marg.* "in behalf of,' St. Paul implores them to exercise sober judgment "for the sake of" the glorious Coming itself. He speaks as though he were an advocate pleading for the Great Day. That Day is shorn of a portion of its glory if those who should be patiently waiting are driven from their senses by mistaken ideas such as these.

by our gathering together unto him, *i.e.* by the reunion of quick and dead, and their meeting with Christ in the great Day of the Lord. Cf.

> **1 Thess. iv. 17.** Then we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
>
> **St. Matt. xxiv. 31.** And he shall send his angels . . . and they shall *gather together* his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

A comparison with 1 Thess. iv. 16-17 and other parts of the N.T. shows clearly that when Christ comes :—

(*a*) there will be some on earth who will not really die.
(*b*) These will, however, be subject to a great spiritual change,
(*c*) and will be caught up together with the dead in Christ to meet their Lord in the air,
(*d*) the agents of God in bringing them together being the angels.

St. Paul, in the present passage mentions the very fact of that grand and happy reunion as an argument against their being distracted or unsettled by these false ideas.

2. **soon.** Either (*a*) *quickly* as in R.V.
or (*b*) *so soon.*

The second would imply that this had happened *soon after the Apostle had left them.* The first would denote that they yielded *immediately they heard the false teaching* whenever that might have occurred.

2 (*repeated*). *That* ye be not *soon shaken in mind*, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by *letter* as from us, as that the day of *Christ* is *at hand*.

To the end that quickly
shaken from your mind.
epistle
the Lord
now present

shaken in mind . . . troubled. (R.V. "shaken from your mind," etc.) The first expression is the stronger of the two. The belief in this false teaching had had various effects on different people. Those of an excitable nature had completely given way. Their sober judgment had disappeared, and instead of patiently waiting for Christ they were like men distraught. Others, of somewhat calmer temperament, had escaped this extreme. But even these were disturbed and unsettled, living a life of feverish unrest. To all, the Apostle appeals for the exercise of calm judgment and self-control, and supports his appeal by reminding them of what he had already taught with regard to the possible nearness of the Day of the Lord.

neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us. According to the punctuation of both A.V. and R.V. we should gather that there were three ways in which the false teachers had endeavoured to support their assertion that the Day of the Lord was actually upon them:

(*a*) **spirit**, *i.e. a revelation by the Holy Spirit.* They may have been themselves deceived, but, *whether such revelation was fancied or pretended*, they declared that it had been manifested to them by the Holy Spirit that the Day of the Lord was nigh.

(*b*) **word**, *i.e. actual teaching*, as opposed to an appeal to a spiritual manifestation.

(*c*) **letter as from us**, *i.e. an Epistle from the Apostle himself.* In other words, they declared that St. Paul himself had taught the same thing in a letter which they had received from him. This may have been

1. *The First Epistle* wrongly understood. In the First Epistle St. Paul emphasizes the *suddenness* of the Coming (v. 2) rather than the *nearness*. Still 1 Thess. iv. 15 would have seemed to them to imply that it might happen in St. Paul's own lifetime.
2. *Another Epistle* which has been lost.
3. *A forged Epistle.* This would seem probable, since he takes special pains in the present Epistle to show them a clear mark of authenticity which will be found in every Epistle (iii. 17).

It is a little doubtful, however, whether the words "as from us" do not apply to all three methods adopted by the false teachers, or, at any rate, to the second of them ("word") in addition to the third. In that case the "word" would be the *oral teaching of the Apostle* as distinguished from his *written letter*, the false teachers appealing to both in support of their assertions.

3. Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except *there come a falling away first*, and *that* man of *sin* be revealed, the son of perdition;

in any wise

the falling away come first

the *marg.* lawlessness

the day of Christ, rather, "the day of the Lord."

is at hand, *i.e.* "is even now upon us." The participle of the same verb is elsewhere (Rom. viii. 38, 1 Cor. iii. 22) translated "present," in contrast with the future idea in "to come" ("nor things *present*, nor things *to come*").

The verse is exceedingly interesting as showing that while St. Paul (in common, probably, with all the early Christians) looked for a somewhat speedy Advent of Christ (1 Thess. iv. 15, 1. Cor. xv. 51), he recognized the uncertainty of it all, and was, moreover, convinced that, however soon it was to be, it was at any rate not at their very doors. Much was to happen first, and although the time might not be long, it was at least appreciable. In any case there was demanded of the Christian patient waiting rather than this feverish unrest.

We need not be surprised at this ignorance on the part of an Apostle and inspired writer as to the time when Christ would come. The Eleven had put the question directly to their risen Master (Acts i. 6), and His answer was, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons."

We notice, moreover, that there was no great change of opinion on St. Paul's part during his life. Later on he certainly seems to have given up the hope of being alive at the Second Advent; but, even in these early Epistles, while he apparently expected to be amongst the quick at the Coming, he writes that they are deceivers who would teach the Thessalonians that the Day is actually upon them.

3. **a falling away.** R.V. "*the* falling away." Before the great Day of Christ's Coming there would be a terrible Apostasy; *the* falling away of those who were actually in the Church. St. Paul says nothing else as to the time when this will be, or as to the form that it will assume. But the verse certainly implies that it will culminate in the revelation of a man so utterly depraved as to merit the title "Man of Sin" or "Man of Lawlessness." The description of the Man of Sin is somewhat detailed, and if he represents in himself the chief characteristics of the Apostasy we gather that this falling away will be marked by:

(*a*) Opposition to everything Divine and sacred.

(*b*) An assumption of Deity by its leader.

(*c*) An utter disregard for the moral law.

(*d*) A hatred of truth, and a pleasure in unrighteousness.

that man of sin. R.V. "the man of sin" (*marg.* "the man of lawlessness"). This section of the Epistle (vv. 3-12) presents one of the most difficult problems of New Testament interpretation. All we can hope to do in a short note is to put together, very briefly, the various principles which should guide us in attempting to interpret, and a few of the many

3 (*repeated*). Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except *there come a falling away first*, and *that* man of *sin* be revealed, the son of perdition;

in any wise

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the *marg.* lawlessness

interpretations which have been suggested. The main difficulty may be summed up thus:

The Apostle speaks of

(*a*) **a great Apostasy**, "the falling away," which will take place before the great Day of the Lord comes.

(*b*) **the man of sin, or lawlessness**, who will be fully revealed, and who will be brought to nought at the coming of Christ.

(*c*) **a restraining influence**, which delays the climax, and which is spoken of in v. 7 as *a person*, in v. 6 as *an influence* only.

The interpretation very largely consists in the answer to three questions:

(1) By the "man of sin," and the "one that restraineth" does the Apostle denote *actual persons*, or does he merely personify *influences or systems* at work in the world?

(2) Is he speaking of persons living or influences at work *at the time he wrote his Epistle*, or does he prophetically refer to what is to appear as the time of our Lord's Second Advent approaches?

(3) Is the revelation of the man of sin closely connected with the "falling away"? Is the one the culmination or climax of the other? This has been already answered in the preceding note.

I. It will remove a little of the difficulty if we bear in mind two important facts:

(*a*) That St. Paul, throughout the whole passage, is *speaking with great reserve*. He is just giving the heads, as it were, of a lesson the Thessalonians had been taught when he was with them. Cf.

ii. 5. Remember ye not, that, *when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

ii. 6. And now *ye know* that which restraineth, etc.

This elliptical method of writing *may have been* due to the fact that a fuller statement would have brought him into conflict with "the mystery of lawlessness" already working, but, however this may be, it is quite clear that a complete understanding of the passage would necessitate a full knowledge of the earlier oral teaching of St. Paul.

(*b*) In all prophecy, the future is foretold through the present. The prophet was a *seer* in that God enabled him to see further than his fellows how present events were shaping towards some greater end. It is highly probable that even the prophet was but dimly conscious of the purpose of God, and *how* his own words would have their complete fulfilment. But God was

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teaching the world through him the significance of the present as helping to foreshadow the future. And so it usually happens that a prophecy has a double fulfilment—one (the lesser) in the immediate present (or even, it may be, in the past), and the other (the greater) in time long after the prophet wrote or spoke. For example,

(1) Hosea (xi. 1) speaks of God calling *Israel* from Egypt. St. Matthew (ii. 15) declares that the prophecy had its higher fulfilment in the return of *Christ* from Egypt.

(2) Our Lord in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (St. Matt. xxiv.) gives the further prophecy of the end of the world. The one event is typical of the other, and it is exceedingly difficult to draw a dividing line between the two prophecies. The same words, to a large extent, apply to both events.

Hence, the prophecy of the present chapter would be in line with prophetic utterances generally, if it had its great fulfilment in the future, and an illustrative or typical fulfilment at the time St. Paul wrote. Moreover, it should not be an occasion of surprise if in the eye of the Apostle himself the perspective was lost, and the type and antitype appeared merged together in one general view.

II. Now there is every appearance, from the language of the chapter, of the necessity of this two-fold interpretation of the prophecy.

(*a*) Certain phrases seem to be used with regard to what was actually in existence when the Apostle wrote: cf.

Who *opposeth* and *exalteth* himself, etc. (v. 4).

He as God *sitteth* in the temple of God (*ib.*).

The mystery of iniquity *doth already work* (7).

He who *now letteth* (*ib.*).

(*b*) On the other hand the falling away and the revelation of the man of sin are distinctly connected with the Second Coming of Christ, which is still in the future: cf.

That day *shall not come, except*, etc. (3).

The Lord shall destroy (him) with the brightness of his coming (8).

(*c*) Taken then as they stand, the words of the prophecy seem to demand a near and a distant interpretation. When we bear in mind the fact that St. Paul, himself, probably looked for a somewhat speedy Advent of Christ (1 Thess. iv. 15, etc.), we can easily understand that events going on in his own time

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which clearly foreshadowed the great falling away that is yet to be, were merged with the more distant picture in one general view, and so the prophecy was couched in somewhat obscure or ambiguous language.

We take this to be the answer to the second of the three questions on p. 87.

III. Next, with regard to the first of the three questions. Are the man of sin, etc. *persons*, or are they mere *personifications* embodying some movement or principle? We notice the following points which may help us to decide:

(*a*) *In favour of the "Man of Sin" being an actual person.*

1. Verse 3 seems to point to him as the head of the great Apostasy.
2. Throughout, there is a contrast drawn between him and our Lord. He is "revealed," for example, just as Christ is revealed.
3. The "Restrainer" seems from v. 7 to be a person, and this would suggest that the man of sin also is a person.
4. St. Paul uses freely the language of Daniel's prophecy (c. xi.). There, by general consent, a person (Antiochus Epiphanes[1]) was described. The same language would suggest a somewhat similar application.
5. Our Lord Himself dimly hinted at an Antichrist such as St. Paul describes, cf.

   St. John v. 43. If another shall come in his own name, etc.
6. This view was held by the early church and seems to have been uncontested for 1500 years.

(*b*) *Against this personal interpretation* Lightfoot notices:

1. The Man of Sin is distinguished from Satan (v. 9), and yet it seems impossible that any one else could be spoken of in such terms.
2. He is described as existing when St. Paul wrote, though unrevealed.
3. St. John speaks of many Antichrists (1 St. John ii. 18), apparently as elements of *the* Antichrist.

[1] Antiochus Epiphanes (King of Syria, B.C. 175-164) massacred the inhabitants of Jerusalem, burnt the city, threw down its walls, and desecrated its Temple (1 Macc. i. 54, etc.). He endeavoured to put an end to the Jewish religion.

3 (*repeated*). Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except *there come a falling away first*, and *that* man of *sin* be revealed, the son of perdition;

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Is it possible that, after all, the most valuable comment on the passage is furnished by 1 St. John ii. 18, "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists"? In other words, the great revelation of Antichrist has yet to be, but in the world of to-day (St. Paul's day and our own) there are terrible foreshadowings of that still more terrible time. And these foreshadowings may be sought in systems or in principles as much as in persons.

IV. It may be useful to summarise the principal of the various interpretations which have been suggested:

(*a*) **The Early Church**, generally, understood the expression "Man of Sin," to denote an actual person. He was to appear as a *Jewish Messiah*, in a *rebuilt Temple* at Jerusalem after the fall of *the Roman Empire*, which was, therefore, the restraining influence. The "mystery of iniquity" working when St. Paul wrote, was referred by Chrysostom (probably by early Christians generally) to *Nero*.

Some explained "that which withholdeth" as the Holy Spirit, restraining by His Divine influence.

Some saw the working of Antichrist in the various forms of heresy which threatened the Church.

(*b*) **Middle Ages.** The Greek Church considered the lawless one to be *Mahomet*, and the Apostasy to be the falling away of Christians to Mahometanism.

In the West many Christians looked upon *the Pope* as an Antichrist. They still held, however, that the complete fulfilment of the prophecy would be determined by the appearance of *a Jew* as the Man of Sin.

(*c*) **Early Protestant Reformers.** The idea of a single individual as the Man of Sin was set aside. Antichrist was to be found in *the Papal system* as a whole, which was soon to be destroyed by Christ at His Coming.

In the Preface to our own Bible of 1611, the Pope is referred to as the Man of Sin.

(*d*) **Criticism of our own day.** Much attention has been drawn in modern criticism to the parallelism between the prophecy of the present chapter with that of Daniel. Caligula with St. Paul, Antiochus Epiphanes with Daniel, typify the fuller development of evil hereafter, and so form the nearer fulfilment of the prophecy in each case.

3 (*repeated*). Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except *there come a falling away first*, and *that* man of *sin* be revealed, the son of perdition;

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Some have seen in Napoleon I. the Man of Sin, and in the casting off of religion during the French Revolution the great falling away.

With others the working of Antichrist is to be seen in the Atheism of our own times.

V. It is not within the scope of these notes to treat fully the various allusions to Antichrist in the Bible. The student should consult the larger commentaries where the prophecies of Daniel and St. Paul, and the Revelation of St. John are compared with one another and with the words of our Lord.

It may be useful, however, to quote passages from our Lord's teaching concerning His Second Coming which bear upon the prophecies of the present chapter. It must be borne in mind, however, that our Lord's discourse on the Last Things, and His prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem are merged one in the other, so that it is impossible to say exactly how much of the detail of the prophecy is yet to be referred to the future.

(*a*) *Our Lord, like St. Paul, uses the language of Daniel.*

St. Matt. xxiv. 15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, etc.

(*b*) *Antichrists will appear before the Great Day of the Lord.*

ib. v. 5. Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

(*c*) *There will be power and signs and lying wonders.*

ib. v. 24. There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders.

(*d*) *There will be deceit of unrighteousness.*

ib. Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

v. 11. Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

(*e*) *Antichrist will appear in the sanctuary of God.* Cf. **v. 15.** quoted above.

(*f*) *The Son of Man will come with glory.*

ib. v. 30. They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

(*g*) *He will bring judgment upon the unbelievers.*

ib. 30. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.

(*h*) *But the time of His Coming is unknown.*

ib. v. 36. Of that day and hour knoweth no man.

3 (*repeated*). Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except *there come a falling away first*, and *that* man of *sin* be revealed, the son of perdition;

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man of sin. For similar expressions cf. 1 Thess. v. 5 (R.V.) sons of light, sons of the day; also 1 Sam. xxv. 25, this man of Belial.

Here, however, sin is so completely a part of the nature of Antichrist, that he is, emphatically, *the* (not *a*) Man of Sin.

be revealed. The Apostle seems to be drawing a parallel (by way of contrast) between Antichrist and the Christ he opposes.

(*a*) Each has a *Coming*; but while with Antichrist it is a coming after the working of Satan (ii. 9), with Christ the Coming is so glorious as to be itself the stimulus to Christian hope and effort (ii. 1).

(*b*) Each has a *Revelation*; but while with Antichrist revelation means perdition (ii. 3), with Christ the revelation is that of a mighty conqueror of the powers of evil (i. 7 and 8).

(*c*) Each at his Coming supports his claim with *wonderful signs*; but whereas Antichrist comes with lying wonders, and deceivableness of unrighteousness, bringing destruction to his following (ii. 9 and 10), Christ comes with angelic hosts (i. 7), and His Divine power brings for His faithful ones glory and inspires in them loving wonder (i. 9-10).

There are further points of contrast:

(*d*) Antichrist, while his deeds are after the working of Satan (ii. 9), arrogantly asserts himself (ii. 4). Christ is sent from God (i. 6-7).

(*e*) Antichrist would establish a system in which law and morality have no place (ii. 3 and 12), whereas a share in the joy of Christ's Coming presupposes holiness and purity of life (ii. 13).

The parallel extends to several other details in the description of Antichrist, *e.g.* his work is spoken of as the *mystery* of iniquity (cf. Col. i. 27, 1 Tim. iii. 16), he himself sits in *the Temple of God*, there is a *definite season* for his revelation, etc.

the son of perdition. As his whole being is utterly corrupt and sinful, so is his destruction absolutely assured,—so certain is it, indeed, that it might seem that he was born for destruction, having deliberately chosen evil in every act of his life.

The phrase is used by our Lord of Judas Iscariot. Cf.

St. John xvii. 12. None of them is lost, but *the son of perdition.*

And the force of the phrase is brought out in the Apostles' prayer at the election of Matthias.

Acts i. 25. Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to *his own place.*

4. *Who* opposeth and exalteth himself *above* all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he *as God* sitteth in the *temple* of God, *shewing himself that he is* God.

he that
against
omit
marg. sanctuary. setting himself forth as

In the same way David speaks of a man to whom he thinks death the *natural* and *necessary* punishment as a *son of death* (2 Sam. xii. 5, *marg.*), a Hebraism which is rendered in our own Bible as "shall surely die," and in the R.V. "is worthy to die."

4. **Who opposeth . . . and exalteth.** It is interesting to notice the points of resemblance between St. Paul's description of the Man of Sin, and Daniel's description of Antiochus Epiphanes. Cf.

Daniel's description of Antiochus.	*St. Paul's description of the Man of Sin.*
The king shall do according to his will (Dan. xi. 36);	The man of *lawlessness* (2 Thess. ii. 3, R.V. *marg.*). with *all power*, and signs, etc. (ii. 9).
and he shall exalt himself (*ib.*),	exalteth himself (ii. 4).
and magnify himself above every god (*ib.*),	he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped (*ib.*);
and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods (*ib.* and comp. vii. 25),	so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God (*ib.*).
and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished (ix. 36):	Ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season (ii. 6).
for that that is determined shall be done (*ib.*).	Then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay, etc. (ii. 8).
He shall think to change times and *laws* (vii. 25).	The lawless one (ii. 8). the mystery of lawlessness (ii. 7).
They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end (vii. 26).	the son of perdition (ii. 3). that they all might be judged (ii. 12). See also ii. 8 quoted above.

who opposeth. R.V. "he that opposeth," *i.e.* "the adversary." The same word passed into ecclesiastical language as practically synonymous with Satan. Here, however, it is used, not of Satan himself, but of him "whose coming is after the working of Satan."

"He will be, therefore, in the most absolute sense, *the enemy of God*, concentrating in himself all that in human life and history is hostile and repugnant to the Divine nature" (Cambridge Bible).

4 (*repeated*). *Who* opposeth and exalteth himself *above* all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he *as God* sitteth in the *temple* of God, *shewing himself that he is* God.

he that
against
omit
marg. sanctuary. setting himself forth as

The language of vv. 3 and 4 seems almost conclusive in favour of a personal interpretation of the Man of Sin. He is the *Man* of Sin, the *son* of perdition (like Judas), the *adversary*, *exalting* himself; he *sits* in God's Temple, he shows himself *as God*.

The present tense of the verb does not imply, of necessity, that St. Paul had in his mind a *contemporary* Antichrist, although it is exceedingly likely that near and distant events were merged in the one prophecy (see p. 89). The Apostle is using vigorous and graphic language with regard to an event which he looks upon as present even though in v. 3 he has himself declared it to be in the future.

and exalteth himself above, rather, as in R.V. "exalteth himself against." The prefix of the Gk. verb translated in our version "above" belongs to the verbal idea itself, and is not a preposition governing a substantive, as here. The phrase might be rendered "and exalteth himself *above measure* against all," etc.

above all that is called God, *i.e.* not only the God of the Christians, but everything *called* god, *e.g.* the gods of the heathen. Everything which lays claim to Divinity is the object of his opposition.

or that is worshipped. His hatred and antagonism go even further than this. Not merely the gods themselves that are worshipped, but *all objects of reverence*, animate or inanimate, are opposed by him. He opposes everything sacred that he may substitute the worship of himself.

The plural form of the word occurs in Acts xvii. 23, where it is translated (R.V.) "the objects of your worship." (A.V. "your devotions.")

so that he as God sitteth, etc. The words "as God" should be omitted, as in the R.V.

the temple of God. The word used by St. Paul and translated *temple* is strictly applicable to that part of the Jewish Temple (the Holy Place) which contained the altar of incense, the golden candlestick, etc., and which formed with the Holy of Holies the inner building as distinct from the Temple Courts and buildings generally.

The early Fathers held that the Man of Sin would actually appear in a rebuilt Temple.

Lightfoot has, however, pointed out that St. Paul always uses the expression figuratively, *e.g.* 1 Cor. iii. 16, "Ye are the temple of God.

We are forbidden, therefore, to interpret this as meaning either

(*a*) The Jewish Temple, which is destroyed,

or (*b*) any Christian building as such,

5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6. And now ye know *what withholdeth that he might* be revealed in his *time.*

that which restraineth, to the end that he may, own season

but rather as a forcible method of showing that the Man of Sin will by his own deliberate action usurp the dignity and prerogative of God.

St. Paul may have used this particular metaphor in consequence of his having in memory the impious attempt of the mad Emperor Caligula to set up his own statue in the Temple at Jerusalem, A.D. 40, little more than ten years before the Epistle was written, and but a few years after St. Paul had left Jerusalem for Tarsus. (Acts ix. 28-30.)

shewing himself that he is God, *i.e.* (to repeat the metaphor) by actually sitting in the Temple of God, and so assuming Divine dignity.

This sentence also may have been suggested by the impious claims to Divinity of the Roman Emperors. Lightfoot (quoting Wetstein) mentions a coin of Julius Cæsar, having on one side his head with the inscription "god," and on the other the words "of the Thessalonians."

5. **Remember.** Twice in the present Epistle, St. Paul draws attention to the subject matter of his oral teaching in Thessalonica:

(*a*) ii. 5. The destruction of the lawless one at Christ's Coming.

(*b*) iii. 10. The principle underlying the distribution of the Church's alms.

when I was yet with you. This is the only occasion (except when he signs the letter at the end) upon which St. Paul uses the singular pronoun. For the moment, in his eager, impassioned writing he forgets his companions. Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 13.

I told you these things. It is clear that the Second Coming of Christ (and therefore the destruction of Antichrist) formed an important part of the subject matter of St. Paul's teaching at Thessalonica. Cf.

1 Thess. v. 2. Yourselves *know perfectly* that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Acts xvii. 7. Saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

6. **And now ye know**, rather, "Well then, ye know also that which," etc. In other words, "When I was with you I told you of Antichrist (v. 5). Ye know, moreover, why it is that Antichrist is not yet revealed. Why then are you driven from your sober senses by an unreasoning and mistaken fear or hope that the Second Advent is upon you?"

what withholdeth. R.V. "that which restraineth."

"The Apostle seems to intend some intermediate power between Christ and Antichrist, which, without being directly Christian, acts as a check upon Antichrist; such as the principle of law or order, civil government, and the like. Of this restraining principle he would find a type in the Roman Empire" (Lightfoot).

7. For the mystery of *iniquity* doth already work: *only he who now letteth will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

lawlessness
only there is one that restraineth now, *marg.* only until he that now restraineth be taken, etc.

In the next verse we note, however, that the Restrainer is spoken of as a person, "there is one that restraineth" (R.V).

The Early Fathers, generally, understood St. Paul to be referring to the Roman Empire as "that which restraineth." Chrysostom, for example, explained that as the Greek power was dissolved by the Roman, so the Roman was to be dissolved by Antichrist, and Antichrist by Christ. Jerome and Chrysostom both give this as the reason for St. Paul writing in such vague terms. To have openly stated that the Roman Empire would one day fall would have provoked persecution from the Roman power. (See note in *Speaker*.)

that he might be revealed. R.V. "to the end that he may be revealed," etc. There is a definite season, in God's determinate foreknowledge, when the Man of Sin shall be revealed. When that season shall have come the revelation and destruction are certain. Meantime God uses human means to prevent the anticipation of that season. The Day of Christ cannot be until, with the great falling away, the time has come for the revelation of the Man of Sin; the revelation of the Man of Sin cannot be, until the withholding influence is "taken out of the way."

7. **mystery.** In the Pauline Epistles the word *mystery* denotes something unknown to man until God determines that revelation shall be made. Cf.

Col. i. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is (*i.e.* the mystery is) Christ in you, the hope of glory. Cf. also

1 Tim. iii. 16. Great is the mystery of godliness.

iniquity, R.V. "lawlessness."

the mystery of iniquity doth already work. The evil forces which will have for their final effect the great falling away and the revelation of the Man of Sin, are even now working, but *in secret*,—the time for destroying them is not yet,—it will not be till the Restrainer is removed.

he who now letteth will let. Notice R.V. rendering. The word translated "letteth" is the same as that rendered "withholdeth" in the preceding verse. Passages are often, unfortunately, somewhat obscured in the A.V. by the same Greek word being rendered in different ways, occasionally in the same verse, or in verses very closely connected. Cf. the A.V. and R.V. renderings of St. Matt. xvi. 25-26.

This obsolete use of the word "let" (*i.e.* to hinder or restrain) is occasionally met with elsewhere in the Bible. Cf.

Exod. v. 4. Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works?

Cf. also Is. xliii. 13, Rom. i. 13.

8. And then shall *that Wicked* be revealed, whom *the Lord* shall *consume with the spirit* of his mouth, and *shall destroy with the brightness* of his coming:

the lawless one
the Lord Jesus, slay with the breath, bring to nought by the manifestation

8. And then, *i.e.* when he that restraineth is "taken out of the way."

that Wicked, literally, as in R.V. "the lawless one." The whole passage is made additionally obscure in the A.V. by the arbitrary rendering of the various Greek expressions denoting the Man of Sin and his evil work. It may be useful to summarize them here:

A.V.	R.V.
that man of sin (3).	the man of sin.
the son of perdition (3).	the son of perdition.
the mystery of iniquity (7).	the mystery of lawlessness.
that Wicked (8).	the lawless one.

It may be added that the lawlessness of the Man of Sin is, possibly, his rebellion against all authority, rather than his mere negative disregard of law.

the Lord, R.V. "the Lord Jesus." Lightfoot suggests that the human name of our Lord was omitted in certain MSS. on the supposition that St. Paul was quoting directly from Is. xi. 4, whereas he is simply paraphrasing the passage.

shall consume. Rather, "shall slay."

with the spirit of his mouth. St. Paul may be using one of two metaphors according as the phrase is taken to denote:

(*a*) *with the word of command.* The Lord Jesus will but speak the word, and the lawless one will fall.

(*b*) *with the actual breath itself.* So powerful is the coming Christ that the mere breath of His mouth is sufficient to destroy His enemies.

The latter is the more probable, judging from the latter half of the verse where "the brightness of his coming" is the *instrument* of destruction.

The former (the "word of command") is, however, the usual meaning of the phrase in Holy Scripture. Cf.

Ps. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by *the breath of his mouth.*

The parallel passage in Isaiah is also a little doubtful.

Is. xi. 4. With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

As an interesting comment upon the phrase, notice the description of the coming Saviour in the Apocalypse of St. John:

Rev. i. 16. Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

Rev. ii. 16. I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

shall destroy, R.V. "bring to nought."

brightness, R.V. "manifestation," the Greek word corresponding to our "epiphany."

9. Even *him*, whose coming is *after* the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

he, according to

The word is used by St. Paul alone in the New Testament, and by him only here and in the Pastoral Epistles. He uses it with reference to:

(*a*) *Christ's First Advent.*

2 Tim. i. 10 (R.V.). Hath now been manifested by *the appearing* of our Saviour Christ Jesus.

(*b*) *Christ's Second Advent.*

2 Tim. iv. 1. Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his *appearing*.

It is frequently used in one or other of these two senses by the early Christian writers.

The Apostle, in a bold metaphor, gives as *the instrument* by which Christ will bring His enemies to nought, the very glory which is to be the admiration of the saints. "It is a cloud and darkness to them, but it gives light to these."

Maclaren beautifully writes that to the ungodly it "will be the vision of a face . . . that will stab them with its light."

coming. Gk. "Parousia," the "presence," or "arrival." The word is a characteristic word of these Advent Epistles, being rarely used elsewhere by St. Paul. In the present Epistle it is used three times: ii. 1, 8 (of Christ), ii. 9 (of the Man of Sin). The use of this almost technical term in verse 9 shows that the parallel drawn between the revelation of the Man of Sin and that of Christ is intentional on the part of the Apostle.

9. **after the working,** *i.e.* "according to the working."

of Satan. There is no doubt whatever that St. Paul believed in the personality of Satan. Satan is not merely a principle of evil, or a tendency to evil; he is an *active agent*, using his power in the endeavour to frustrate the work of God. In St. Paul's mind he is as truly *a person* as is an angel, or Christ Himself. Cf.

Rom. xvi. 20. God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

2 Cor. xi. 14. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

1 Thess. ii. 18. We would have come unto you . . . but Satan hindered us.

1 Tim. i. 20. Whom I have delivered unto Satan.

Here the Apostle draws attention to the fact that Antichrist, like Christ, has a higher power behind him;—he comes "according to the working of Satan," while Christ comes in accordance with the good pleasure of the Father.

power and signs and lying wonders. Antichrist will support his impious pretensions by the working of actual miracles. The word "lying," which probably applies to all three nouns, does not denote that these miracles are fictitious, but that they have for their object the deceiving of men. Our Lord, similarly, declared that the many Antichrists which

10. And with all *deceivableness* of unrighteousness *in* them that *perish*; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

deceit
for, are perishing

11. And for this cause God *shall send* them a *strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie:

sendeth
working of error

were to arise would display miraculous power, in order to deceive if possible the saints themselves. Cf.

St. Matt. xxiv. 24. There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Lightfoot distinguishes between the three terms thus:

power has reference to the *author* of the miracles. They are works denoting "power" on the part of him who performs them.

signs and wonders have reference to the *witnesses* of the miracles.
signs denoting their effect on the understanding,
wonders denoting their impression on the moral sense.

10. **deceivableness of unrighteousness**, rather, "*deceit* of unrighteousness." The expression is perfectly general. Everything that is unrighteous and that can deceive is an instrument by which the lawless man would secure a following, and ensure their perdition.

in them that perish, R.V. "for them that are perishing." Notice how the present tense is kept up throughout the greater part of the prophecy.

Here, however, the present has special force. Just as the righteous are in *the way of salvation*, so those who love not the truth are in *the way of perishing*, even though the Day of Judgment has not yet come.

the love of the truth. Their offence was worse than the mere rejection of the truth. They not only failed to receive the truth, but they had no desire for or love of it.

that they might be saved. Salvation is offered to all—it is free to man to accept it or refuse it. Cf.

St. John v. 40. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

1 Tim. ii. 4. Who will have all men to be saved.

God's wish is that all shall be saved. Those who receive not the love of the truth are deliberately refusing God's offer of salvation.

11. **for this cause.** Not because they were deceived by the Man of Sin, but because they "received not the love of the truth."

God shall send them strong delusion. Persistent and wilful rejection of the truth brings its own judicial punishment. Those who *will* not, at last *can* not. "The truth" is offered to all, freely, and God's will is that all should accept it. But when men set themselves absolutely against the love of the truth, God punishes them by rendering them *unable* to appreciate the truth or to discriminate between truth and error. *Hardness of heart* has for its punishment *blindness of heart*. But while it is perfectly true, from the point of view of God's moral government

12. That they all might be *damned* who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

judged

13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God *hath from the beginning chosen you* to salvation *through* sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

chose you from the beginning (*marg.* as first-fruits) in

of the world, to say that He *sends* this inner working of error, it will also be seen that the punishment is perfectly natural, just as the limb that is never exercised becomes at last incapable of exercise. Illustrations will occur to the reader from the Bible story. Pharaoh, for example, hardened his heart against the Divine command respecting Israel; and this he did over and over again till at last *God hardened his heart*—he who *would* not see the truth, at last *could* not.

strong delusion, rather "an inner working of error"; not something outside themselves whose purpose was to deceive them, but rather *a state of heart* in which error was readily accepted as truth. They began by *wishing* to be deceived. They had no love of the truth, but found pleasure in the lie. At last their wish was fulfilled. Henceforward delusion should come until final judgment was assured.

Satan's special aim is to make "the worse appear the better reason." God now confirms this since man wilfully and persistently desires it. "A terrible combination when God and Satan are agreed to deceive a man! Yet what an encouragement to see God using Satan for His own purposes." (Canon Mason.)

that they should believe a lie, rather "the lie," as opposed to "the truth."

12. **damned** = "judged," and therefore "condemned."

that they all might be damned. "Three stages are here described in the downward career of the wicked.

(*a*) Their obstinately setting themselves against the truth. This is their *own* act.

(*b*) The judicial infatuation which overtakes them at a certain point. They are then scarcely their own masters, it is a *divine* judgment.

(*c*) Their final punishment, for which the second stage is an ordained preparation."[1]

who believed not, etc. Notice the double offence:

(*a*) Wilful and obstinate rejection of the truth.

(*b*) Pleasure in unrighteousness.

13. **But.** The Apostle gratefully recognizes the happy contrast afforded by the Thessalonians. While those guilty ones are deceived and doomed to destruction, these believers of the truth are chosen of God and in the way of obtaining salvation.

we are bound to give thanks. Cf. i. 3, where a similar expression is used. There he thanks God for the signs of progress in his beloved

[1] Lightfoot on ii. 11.

13 (*repeated*). But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God *hath from the beginning chosen you* to salvation *through* sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

chose you from the beginning (*marg.* as first-fruits) in

Church; here his thanksgiving is called forth by the recognition of God's eternal purpose which it all illustrates.

beloved of the Lord, *i.e.* of the Lord Jesus, as, generally, in the Epistles. This seems clear from the use of the Name *God* in the other parts of the sentence.

hath . . . chosen you, rather "chose" you, referring back to the time (but it was "from the beginning") when God's purpose concerning them was framed.

The Apostle emphasizes the contrast between those of whom he has previously spoken and these Thessalonians, chosen of God. The parallel may be shown thus:

The followers of the Lawless One	*The Chosen of God*
(*a*) believed the lie (11),	in belief of the truth (13),
(*b*) had pleasure in unrighteousness (12),	in sanctification of the Spirit (*ib.*),
(*c*) received from God a working of error—their natural punishment (11),	received the call of the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory (14),
(*d*) were doomed to perish (10).	were chosen to salvation (13).

from the beginning, *i.e.* "from all eternity," "before time was." Cf.:

St. Matt. xxv. 34. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you *from the foundation of the world.*

Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world.*

Some ancient authorities have a different reading here, viz., "as first-fruits." But while, concerning one of the earliest of the more western churches, such a term would be singularly appropriate, and quite in keeping with St. Paul's usual language (cf. Rom. xvi. 5, 1 Cor. xvi. 15), it is nevertheless more probable that the received reading is correct, and that St. Paul is drawing a distinction between their *election*, which was from all eternity, and their actual *call*, which was at the time when they first heard the Gospel.

to salvation. Not, necessarily, to final salvation (see below). God, from all eternity, chose these Thessalonians, whom He and His Son loved (1 Thess. i. 4, R.V., 2 Thess. ii. 13), to enjoy special privileges, which, if properly used, would ensure final salvation. He chose to put them *in the way of salvation*, but the rest of the passage shows that a fall from grace was possible, and that it was, therefore, *for them to keep in the way* if final salvation was to be assured. Cf.:

"I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that He hath called me

13 (*repeated*). But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God *hath from the beginning chosen you* to salvation *through* sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

chose you from the beginning (*marg.* as first-fruits) in

to this *state of salvation*, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace *that I may continue in the same* unto my life's end."

God hath from the beginning chosen you. I. That this being chosen of God does not necessarily imply election to *final salvation* is clear from the following:

(*a*) *The Apostle shows how salvation is to be secured*:
1. Holiness of life—in sanctification of the Spirit;
2. Christian faith—in belief of the truth.
In other words (but altering the order), right faith and practice.

(*b*) *He implies that there is the possibility of a fall from grace.*
He commands them
1. To stand fast (to hold their ground as regards their whole Christian attitude and life).
2. To hold the traditions taught by Word or Epistle.
Again, faith and practice.

(*c*) *He prays that they may "continue in the present state of salvation"*; that God will stablish them
1. In every good work,
2. In every good word.
Once more, faith ("word") and practice ("work").

Notice also that they are not called "to glory," but "to the obtaining of glory." Personal effort is required if God's grace is to be hoped for.

II. There are three stages in their spiritual history:
1. God *chose them*, from all eternity, to enjoy these special Christian privileges.
2. God *called them*, in time, when the gospel was first preached to them.
3. God *will give them finally the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ* if they strive to make their calling and election sure.

through sanctification of the Spirit, *i.e.* "of the Holy Spirit." This spiritual sanctification and a lively Christian faith (the belief of the truth) describe "wherein the call to salvation consists." God chooses them to salvation by way of holiness and faith (acceptance of Christian doctrine). The verse should be compared with

1 St. Pet. i. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

14. Whereunto he called you *by* our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.	through
15. *Therefore*, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye *have been* taught, whether by word, or *our epistle*.	So then, were by epistle of ours

belief of the truth, unlike those others who "believed not the truth" (v. 12), but believed a lie (v. 11).

14. **Whereunto**, *i.e.* to spiritual sanctification, and acceptance of the truth working towards their final salvation.

he called you. This was the definite *call* "in time." The *choice* had been "from the beginning."

by our gospel. Not, of course, the written Gospel, but the Gospel of good tidings *preached* by St. Paul and his companions. The word translated "gospel" is not used for the written Gospel till the time of Irenæus (cir. A.D. 180). In the N.T. it denotes the good news concerning Christ and His work of redemption. Here the phrase is "our" Gospel (*i.e.* the Gospel preached by the three of us, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus). Elsewhere it is "the Gospel of God" (1 Thess. ii. 2), "the Gospel of Christ" (*ib.* iii. 2), "*the* Gospel" (*ib.* ii. 4), "my Gospel" (2 Tim. ii. 8), "the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 8) (see p. 11).

to the obtaining of the glory, etc. The glory was not assured simply because they received the call. It had to be "obtained." *How* obtained is shown in v. 13,—in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

It is a little doubtful what the whole phrase means. There are three possible interpretations, viz., God hath chosen you:

1. *So as to add to Christ's glory.*
   The glory of Christ increases as His kingdom is enlarged.
2. *For a glorious possession of Christ.*
   "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."
3. *To obtain a share of Christ's heavenly glory.*
   "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The last, which agrees with the A.V. rendering, is probably correct.

15. **Therefore, stand fast.** "Maintain your present position, see that there is no fall from grace." Two comments on this passage may well be quoted, the first from the Speaker, the second from Lightfoot:

1. Unconscious of what we should call *logical inconsistency*, he immediately adds, *stand fast.* "Standing fast" because God hath chosen us to Himself for the purpose of acquiring salvation, is, at once, logical and spiritual consistency.
2. The drift of the Apostle's 'therefore' is best apprehended by Phil. ii. 12, 13, R.V. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work,' etc. 'Your election should be an encouragement to you in well-doing, and not an occasion of carelessness.'

16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, *even* our Father, which *hath loved* us, and *hath given* us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

omit
loved, gave

the traditions, *i.e.* the truths of the Gospel *handed on* to you by us, God's messengers. This Gospel teaching was partly *oral*, "by word," partly *written*, by "our epistle."

Of course there were traditions *and* traditions. The traditions which were merely of human origin are condemned by St. Paul as they were condemned by our blessed Lord. Cf.

St. Mk. vii. 9. Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Col. ii. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, . . . and not after Christ.

But the traditions handed down by the Apostles of God were not of human origin. And these the Thessalonians are exhorted to "hold fast."

our epistle. St. Paul may be here alluding to

(*a*) The Epistle which we know as the First Epistle to the Thessalonians,

or (*b*) some other Epistle unknown to us.

It seems highly probable that the former of these alternatives is the correct one, since:

(*a*) The traditions specially meant here are the teaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ.

(*b*) This formed the main part of the subject matter of the First Epistle.

(*c*) St. Paul had been particularly anxious that the First Epistle should be read to all (1 Thess. v. 27).

16. **Now our Lord,** etc. This passage should be compared with 1 Thess. iii. 11-13. In each case St. Paul passes from one great division to another with *prayer*. In each case he prays that God the Father and God the Son will stablish them in every good work and word.

1 Thess. iii. 11-13 (R.V.).	2 Thess. ii. 16, 17 (R.V.).
Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus,	Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father
. . . . .	. . . . .
stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.	stablish them (*i.e.* "your hearts") in every good work and word.

Notice, too, the precisely similar commencement of the next section in the two cases.

our Lord Jesus Christ himself. There is a peculiar dignity in this full title of God the Son, and the addition of the word "himself." It

16 (*repeated*). Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, *even* our Father, which *hath loved* us, and *hath given* us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

omit
loved, gave

may be interesting to notice the various titles given to our Lord in this early Epistle (R.V.):

(1) *Christ* (iii. 5).
(2) *the Lord* (i. 9, ii. 2, 13, iii. 1, 3, 4, 5, 16).
(3) *the Lord of peace himself* (iii. 16).
(4) *the Lord Jesus* (i. 7, ii. 8).
(5) *our Lord Jesus* (i. 8, 12).
(6) *the Lord Jesus Christ* (i. 1, 2, 12, iii. 12).
(7) *our Lord Jesus Christ* (ii. 2, 14, iii. 6, 18).
(8) *our Lord Jesus Christ himself* (ii. 16).

With regard to the Christology of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians we may notice that in spite of the fact that the letter was written to meet a passing difficulty of one small section of the Christian Church, and that everything else was, so to speak, foreign to the general purpose of the Epistle, there is nevertheless abundant assertion of the Divinity of Christ. The leading points may be summarized thus:

(*a*) *God the Son has a distinct Personality from the Father.*
1. They are mentioned as separate persons (i. 1, 12, etc.).
2. The Son directs their hearts into the love of the Father (iii. 5).

(*b*) *Yet there is Unity of Substance, identity of operation.*
1. The two are joint nominatives of a singular verb (ii. 17). See note.
2. The same grammatical arrangement occurs in 1 Thess. iii. 11.

(*c*) *The Lord Jesus Christ is, therefore, Divine.*
1. The Church is *in Him*, as in the Father (i. 1).
2. Grace and peace come from Him as from the Father (i. 2, 12).
3. To Him is given the title "Lord" (ii. 8, 13, etc.).
4. He is the Lord of peace (iii. 16); so is the Father (1 Thess. v. 23).
5. His Name is even placed *before* that of the Father (ii. 16), as it is in the Benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), although usually it comes after (*e.g.* 1 Thess. iii. 11).
6. He is in heaven (i. 7).
7. Prayer is offered to Him as to the Father (ii. 16, 17, iii. 5).
8. He is worshipped as God (i. 12).
9. Eternal destruction means banishment from *Him* (i. 9), and follows disobedience to His Gospel (i. 8).

17. Comfort your hearts, and stablish *you* in every good *word and work.*	them	work and word

CHAPTER III.

1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may *have free course*, and be glorified, even as it is with you:	run	

everlasting consolation, *here*, under suffering, but *hereafter also*, when affliction is unknown. It is everlasting, never-failing.

good hope, *i.e.* of future reward.

through grace. Not

(*a*) *through any grace in ourselves*, as, possibly, in Col. iv. 6, "Let your speech be alway with grace,"

but (*b*) *in the grace of God.* Any consolation or good hope we may have is the free gift of God; it is not secured by any merit in ourselves.

17. **Comfort your hearts.** The Greek verb is singular although two nominatives (the Lord Jesus and God our Father) precede. This may be due to the fact that the phrasing of the sentence throws the emphasis, as it were, on the last nominative, and so the singular verb is suggested. But it is interesting to note that there is the same combination in 1 Thess. iii. 11 where the Son is mentioned second. Lightfoot remarks that "there is probably no instance in St. Paul of a plural adjective or verb, where the two Persons of the Godhead are mentioned."

consolation . . . comfort. Connect the two clauses thus (R.V.): "God, Who gave us eternal comfort . . . comfort your hearts."

word and work, R.V. "work and word." There is a kind of climax. "May God stablish you, not only in your works, but even in your very words!"

CHAPTER III.

The Apostle enters upon the concluding section of his letter. He asks of them their prayers that the word of the Lord may speed very swiftly on its course, and be received everywhere with honour. That it *may* thus speed, he further asks them to pray for the deliverance of the preachers themselves from monstrous and depraved men. Then after expressing his great confidence in those to whom he is writing, he gives counsel concerning their treatment of the idle and disorderly, and further counsel with respect to any who may be disobedient to the exhortation and commands contained in the present Epistle. The letter closes with his usual signature and benediction.

1. **pray for us.** St. Paul, evidently, has great belief in the power of prayer. He has prayed for his flock, he now entreats them to pray in return for him and his fellow-preachers. It is so generally in his Epistles

1 (*repeated*). Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may *have free course*, and be glorified, even as it is with vou:

run

(*e.g.* Rom. xv. 30, 1 Thess. v. 25, etc.). Cf. also the language of St. James.

St. James v. 16 (R.V.). Pray one for another. . . . The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.

It should be noted that, in the present instance, St. Paul's request is that they will pray "in order that" the word of the Lord may run, etc. The prayer is a potent factor in securing the blessing.

the word of the Lord, *i.e.* the Gospel message.

may have free course, *i.e.* may "run" (as in R.V.), may "speed swiftly." St. Paul is here (perhaps unconsciously) using the language of the 147th Psalm. It has been already stated that there is an almost entire absence of Old Testament quotation in the Epistle (see p. 13). This is, probably, due to the fact that no subject is introduced which needs such support as the Old Testament might give; probably also to the fact that St. Paul is writing to men, the majority of whom are unfamiliar with the Jewish Scriptures (*i.e.* Gentiles). There are several passages, however, in which there is this *unconscious* quotation; St. Paul, in his perfect knowledge of the Old Testament Scripture, falling naturally into its language, or using its figures without actual quotation. It may be interesting to summarize the principal of these:—

Old Testament (R.V.).	*2 Thessalonians* (R.V.).
1. Dan. xi. 36. Dan. vii. 25.	II. 4. (See note on II. 4.)
2. Ps. xxix. 7. The flames of fire.	I. 8. In flaming fire.
3. Ps. lxxix. 6. Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not.	I. 8. Rendering vengeance to them that know not God.
4. Is. ii. 19. Men shall go . . . from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, etc.	I. 9. Eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his might.
5. Is. xi. 4. With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.	II. 8. Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth.
6. Ps. cxlvii. 15. His word runneth very swiftly.	III. 1. That the word of the Lord may run.

be glorified, *i.e.* "be received with honour." Cf. Acts xiii. 48, "The Gentiles . . . glorified the word of the Lord."

as it is with you. The Word of the Lord had certainly "run very swiftly" and had "been glorified" at Thessalonica. In a very short space of time the Thessalonian Church had been placed on such a sure foundation that persecution was powerless against it; its

2. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not *faith.*

marg. the faith

3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from *evil.*

the evil one (*marg.* evil)

fame had spread abroad throughout Macedonia and Achaia, so that everywhere the Apostle heard of its spiritual progress and its constancy in the faith (1 Thess. i. 5, 8, 9). The recognition here of their own excellent work would stimulate the Thessalonians to further effort, and predispose them to the carrying out of the injunctions which follow.

2. **And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.** Who were these unreasonable and wicked men from whom St. Paul sought deliverance? Two answers have been suggested.

(*a*) *Jews, who were interfering with his work at Corinth.*

This seems the probable explanation of the passage. We know from Acts xviii. that about the time at which St. Paul wrote the Epistle he was the object of bitter persecution on the part of the Jews. They "made insurrection with one accord" and brought St. Paul to the judgment seat of Gallio. It was only the firm and uncompromising attitude of the Roman deputy that saved the Apostle.

(*b*) *False brethren, who were* in *the Church but not* of *it.*

Those who prefer this interpretation maintain that it suits better the latter half of the verse, "all men have not faith," which they affirm would have more point if referred "to those from whom faith might have been expected," *i.e.* to members of the Christian Church.[1]

In support of this explanation 2 Cor. xi. 13 is quoted to show that there were "false apostles" at Corinth.

unreasonable, perverse, outrageous, monstrous.

all men have not faith. R.V. *marg.* "the faith." Either

(*a*) All men have not *the* faith, *i.e.* have not accepted the Gospel;—referring to *the Jews*, since it would have been unnecessary to say it of the heathen.

or (*b*) All have not faith, *i.e.* even though they profess to have accepted the Gospel;—referring to *the false brethren* at Corinth (see above).

3. **the Lord is faithful.** The Lord is to be trusted. Cf.

1 Thess. v. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. There is a happy play upon the two meanings of the word faithful, viz., "trusting" and "trustworthy." All have not *the faith*, yet He is ever *faithful*. All have not yet learnt the happiness (as you have) of *trusting* in Christ (accepting His Gospel), yet He is *trustworthy*, His fidelity is assured. This is even more telling if the correct translation in verse 2

[1] So the Speaker on iii. 2.

4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

is *faith* rather than *the faith*. There is the same play on the two words in

2 Tim. ii. 13 (R.V.). If we are *faithless*, he abideth *faithful*.

who shall stablish you in accordance with our prayer. Cf. ii. 17.

and keep you from evil. R.V. "the evil one," *marg.* "evil." It is a little doubtful what St. Paul signifies here by the word translated "evil." It is either

(*a*) *neuter*, denoting *evil or harm generally*. But this is against the usage of the New Testament. There are only two absolutely certain instances of the neuter use as against eight certain instances of the masculine (Lightfoot).

or (*b*) *masculine*, denoting *a person* from whom the Lord will guard His elect. Either

1. *The Evil One*, as in the Lord's Prayer (St. Matt. vi. 13 R.V.).

or 2. *The Man of Sin* mentioned in the preceding chapter.

Most commentators prefer to interpret it as denoting "The Evil One," *i.e.* Satan.

It is just possible that the Apostle may have been consciously borrowing the language of the Lord's Prayer.

There is no doubt that St. Paul believed in the *personality* of Satan. Satan, "the Adversary," "the Tempter," "the Evil One," is not merely a principle of evil, or a tendency to evil; but he is an *active agent*, using his powers in the endeavour to frustrate the work of God. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 18, iii. 5, 2 Cor. xi. 14, etc.

4. **we have confidence in the Lord touching you.** The Lord = the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole sentence may mean

(*a*) We have confidence *touching you*, and this confidence arises from you and ourselves being "in the Lord." Cf.

2 Thess. i. 1. The Church of the Thessalonians *in* . . . the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gal. v. 10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded.

(*b*) We have confidence *in Christ*, and this confidence leads us to expect that you both do and will do, etc.

The former seems preferable, but the difference of meaning is not very great. Sadler paraphrases thus: "Both ye and we are in Christ, and so as Christ has given us a good hope concerning you, and ye are continuing to abide in Him, we have the best ground for trusting that His grace will enable you to obey always, and in all things."

5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting for* Christ.

patience of

both do and will do. He guards against any suspicion that a rebuke is implied, by inserting the present tense as well as the future. He is sure they are obeying now as he has confidence they will obey in the future.

The anxious care of St. Paul to avoid wounding the feelings of those to whom he writes is well shown in the Thessalonian Epistles. Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10, v. 11, etc. Cf. also:

> **Phil. iv. 10** I rejoiced . . . that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; *wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

5. **the Lord.** Some commentators, following Basil and other of the Greek Fathers, have held that by "the Lord" is here meant *God the Holy Spirit.* If so the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are mentioned in this verse. The analogy of the rest of the Epistle is against this, and "the Lord" probably denotes *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We have, however, in the Epistle, valuable attestation of the truth of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. Cf.

> **ii. 13.** We are bound to give thanks alway to God (*i.e. the Father*) for you, brethren beloved of the Lord (*i.e. the Son*), because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit (*i.e. the Holy Spirit*).

the love of God. It is doubtful whether this means

(*a*) The love which God had for them.

(*b*) The love which they should have for God.

The next phrase would suggest that the first of the above alternatives is preferable (see next note). But probably both are included.

"May we not say that the Apostles availed themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, of the vagueness or rather comprehensiveness of language, to express a great spiritual truth . . . and that various senses are so combined and interwoven, that it is very seldom possible to separate the one from the other?" (Lightfoot).

the patient waiting for Christ, R.V. "the patience of Christ."

Not (*a*) *The patient waiting for Christ's Second Coming*, although this would be an interpretation peculiarly suitable to these Advent Epistles;

but (*b*) *The patient endurance Christ displayed.* In this case the two phrases would be in parallel arrangement: "May the Lord direct your hearts so that they may receive and in a measure reciprocate or copy *the Father's love*, and *the Son's patience!*"

6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which *he* received of us.

they, *marg.* ye

7. For yourselves know how ye ought to *follow* us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

imitate

The second interpretation would indirectly involve the first, and so the general Advent teaching of the Epistle is not lost sight of, after all.

6. **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,** *i.e.*

(*a*) as His representative and with His authority,

(*b*) as reminding you of our mutual brotherhood in Him.

that ye withdraw yourselves. At different times in his Apostolic career St. Paul had to pass upon offenders sentences of different degrees of severity.

(*a*) In the gravest offences it was *Excommunication.* Cf.

1 Tim. i. 20. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have *delivered unto Satan.*

Cf. also 1 Cor. v. 5.

(*b*) Here it would seem to imply a punishment less severe—*social rather than ecclesiastical excommunication.* The offender is still called a "brother." Cf. iii. 15, Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

disorderly, a metaphor "from *military usage*, where it is not allowable to break and leave the ranks."

the tradition (see note on ii. 15). The tradition, here, is the Apostolic instruction with regard to the Christian life.

which he received. The reading is doubtful, Either

(*a*) (as in R.V.) which *they* received, *i.e.* which "all the erring brethren" received. The construction is, however, very awkward in the R.V., the word "every" seeming to demand a singular pronoun as in A.V.

Or (*b*) (as in R.V. *marg.*) which *ye* received, *i.e.* which all ye Thessalonians received.

7. **yourselves know,** *i.e.* without my having to impress it upon you.

how ye ought, *i.e.* not merely

(*a*) *that* ye ought, etc.

but (*b*) *how, in what manner*, ye ought, etc.

to follow us, rather, as in R.V., "to imitate us." Similarly in ver. 9 and in 1 Thess. i. 6, 1 Cor. xi. 1.

we behaved not ourselves disorderly. The Apostle draws attention to two special characteristics of his own walk amongst them, viz.:

(*a*) Orderly behaviour.

(*b*) Untiring manual labour.

The passage should be compared with 1 Thess. ii. 1-12.

8. Neither did we eat *any man's bread* for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not *be chargeable to* any of you:

bread at any man's hand

burden

Notice especially the following:

1 *Thess.* ii.	2 *Thess.* iii.
10. how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.	7. we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.
9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.	8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you . . . to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

8. for nought, *i.e.* without paying for it. The Apostles laboured night and day lest they should incur a charge of living idly at the expense of their flock.

Notice R.V. It is not "any man's bread" but "bread at any man's hand."

wrought with labour, etc. Every Jewish parent considered it his duty to teach his son a trade. St. Paul's trade was that of a tentmaker, his work being to frame the material for the tent from the goat's hair of Cilicia, his native district. It was because of the identity of their craft that Paul and Aquila were living together at Corinth at the time this Epistle was written. (Acts xviii. 3. "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.")

The work of tent-making was ill-paid, and although the Apostle did not hesitate to labour far into the night ("night and day") he found the remuneration insufficient for his needs. Both at Thessalonica (Phil. iv. 16) and at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 9) he received pecuniary aid from the Macedonian Churches. St. Paul several times alludes to his own manual labour, and to the dignity of work in general. Cf.

> **Acts xx. 34.** Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

labour and travail. Lightfoot distinguishes thus:

labour implies the 'wear and tear' arising from continued labour,

travail has for its leading notion the idea of struggling to overcome difficulties.

The first is therefore passive, the second active.

9. Not because we have not *power*, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to *follow* us.

the right

imitate

10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

If any will not work, etc.

11. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

that we might not be chargeable. There were three reasons for the Apostle's labour:

(*a*) *A dignified independence,*
iii. 10. "If any would not work, neither should he eat."

(*b*) *A tender regard for his flock.*
iii. 8. "that we might not be chargeable to any of you." (R.V. "might not burden.")

(*c*) *A desire to set a good example.*
iii. 9. "to make ourselves an ensample."

Another reason is given in 2 Cor. xi. 12, and yet another in Acts xx. 34.

9. **Not because we have not the power.** R.V. "the right." Cf.
St. Matt. x. 9, 10. Provide neither gold nor silver . . . for the workman is worthy of his meat.

St. Paul is careful to guard against any misunderstanding. He, himself, in this particular instance, waives his claim, of set purpose, in order to benefit his flock. But the right surely belongs to the teacher to look for some repayment, if he needs it, from the taught. Cf.

1 Thess. ii. 6. We might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

1 Cor. ix. 6 (R.V.). Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working (*i.e.* for our daily bread)?

ensample=pattern, type, model.

10. **if any would not**, rather "will not," direct quotation as in R.V. *will not*=is not willing to. "If any man is not willing to work, let him not be relieved out of the Church's funds."

The Apostle is not speaking of those who are *unable* to work. It was, of course, for the deserving poor that the funds at the disposal of the Church were intended. St. Paul is here applying to Christian practice what seems to have been a favourite proverb in the Jewish schools.

if any . . . neither should he eat. Early as the Epistle is, we notice that it tacitly assumes:

(*a*) a Church at Thessalonica (i. 1),

(*b*) with a recognized ministry (1 Thess. v. 12)

(*c*) and religious services (1 Thess. v. 26, 27), notably Holy Communion (which the "holy kiss" seems to imply),

(*d*) and also a fund for the relief of the poor (2 Thess. iii. 10).

11. **we hear**, etc. This restless idleness had been in the Apostle's mind when he wrote the First Epistle. Cf.
1 Thess. iv. 11. That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

12. Now them that are such we command and exhort *by our* Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

in the

13. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

Since that Epistle was sent a further report had been received, and the evil which, when the first letter had been written, was incipient and brought forth a mild exhortation only, had now developed and needed a severe reprimand.

which walk among you. This restless interference on the part of some was a hindrance to the main body of Christians.

working not at all, but are busybodies. There is a play on words in the original Greek, and various interpretations have been suggested with the object of representing this in English, *e.g.*

(*a*) Busy only with what is not their own business (Jowett).

(*b*) Not being business men but busybodies (Mason).

We infer from the general tenour of the Epistle that this restlessness was due to the false notions men held with regard to the Second Coming of Christ. If that Advent was even "now present" why work at all? And so, while probably some gave themselves over more closely to spiritual concerns, the weaker members of the flock neglected their daily work merely to interfere in the affairs of others.

12. **command and exhort.** The first by virtue of his authority as an Apostle and their father in God.

The second to soften the harshness of the first—"We command; nay, more, we entreat, in virtue of our common brotherhood in Christ."

by our Lord Jesus Christ. R.V. "in," etc. There is good authority for each reading. St. Paul appeals

(*a*) in the name of Christ,

(*b*) by virtue of their common union in Christ.

eat their own bread, not the bread of others. Let disorder give way to quietness; officious interference with others to honourable labour; idle dependence to the earning and eating their own bread.

13. **But ye, brethren.** "But, as for you, brethren, in contradistinction to the idle members of the community, of whom I have just spoken."

be not weary, "Faint not," "Do not falter." The Apostle condemns *restlessness*, and commands the busybody *to be quiet*. But this must not be misunderstood. He would put no check upon "well-doing." The well-doer must never tire or falter in his work. Cf.

Gal. vi. 9. Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

be not weary in well-doing. The Greek commentators, generally, understood this to have special reference to alms-giving, *e.g.*

(*a*) "Let not their improbity—their want of well-doing—overcome your munificence" (Theodoret).

14. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, *that* he may be ashamed.

to the end that

(*b*) "Withdraw yourselves from them and reprove them; do not, however, suffer them to perish with hunger" (Chrysostom).[1]

There is the same apparent connection in Gal. vi. 9, quoted above, where the whole passage (vv. 6-10) has to do with the gifts of one's substance to fellow-Christians.

It is far more probable, however, that the precept here is perfectly general. "These men are a blot upon the Church, and it is necessary that you should withdraw yourselves from such in order to reclaim them. But, brethren, beware lest you yourselves fall. You have done nobly hitherto; see that ye never falter in your honourable Christian course."

14. **obey not our word by this epistle,** etc. Some commentators have considered that the phrase "by this (or, rather, *the*) epistle" should be joined to the part of the sentence which follows; and so we have two suggestions very different from that implied in the punctuation of A.V. and R.V. viz.:

(*a*) If any obey not our word, by an epistle sent from you to me make known to me the offenders.

(*b*) If any obey not our word, by means of the Epistle brand him as an offender; or in other words, convict him on the testimony of the Epistle itself, or use the Epistle for the purpose of branding him.

These seem very improbable. The first would assume that an epistle was expected by the Apostle in reply to his own, and this the rest of the present Epistle gives us no reason to assume; while the second suggestion is very improbable, and altogether foreign to the spirit of the following exhortation, "admonish him as a brother." The natural explanation is, in all probability, therefore, the correct one: "We have given you oral teaching on an earlier occasion, we now emphasize it by putting it down in writing, and signing it with our own signature. There can be no doubt then as to our wishes in the matter. If, therefore, any one refuses to obey our express command as set down in this present Epistle, it is your duty to bring pressure to bear upon him so as to induce him to repent and amend, and thus remove what is the one blot upon the Thessalonian Church."

note that man. "Set your mark on him." Let him see, and let the world see, that such conduct has not the approval of the main body of Christians.

have no company. Cf. ver. 6 (and note).

[1] Quoted in Sadler.

15. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always *by all means*. The Lord be with you all.

in all ways.

that he may be ashamed. This implies more then than *merely* individual action on the part of those who were scandalised by his conduct. The Church must act as a body and publicly, otherwise shame would not come, and repentance, therefore, would not come either.

15. **Yet count him not.** Rather, "*And* count him not." There is no contrast in St. Paul's mind such as the word "yet" would imply. "Note the man, have no company with him; and all the time act in full memory of the fact that he is a brother, not an enemy."

count him not as an enemy. The verse should be compared with our Lord's teaching on the subject of Church discipline. St. Matt. xviii. 15-18. St. Paul is here urging upon the Church action in the direction indicated by Christ. Cf.

St. Matt. xviii. 17. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church (for the purpose, that is, of securing the Church's influence, and public condemnation of the offence).

Ecclesiastical excommunication is suggested by Christ only when the Church's pressure has been brought to bear on the man and has failed. (*ib.*) As a matter of fact, the man has then excommunicated himself.

Here, then, St. Paul is obviously recommending something short of actual excommunication, since the excommunicated man was to be treated as *a heathen man* and *a publican* (*ib.*) whereas the offender at Thessalonica was still to be reckoned *a brother*.

16. **the Lord of peace.** "The Lord," here, is "the Lord Jesus Christ," unless St. Paul is departing from what would otherwise seem to be his invariable custom (see, however, note on iii. 5).

In the prayer of 1 Thess. v. 23 we have a similar appeal to "the God of peace," *i.e.* "to the Father," and the two verses, together, give an interesting indirect testimony to our Lord's Divinity.

In a certain sense it may be truthfully said that any one of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity is "the God of peace." (Cf. Gal. v. 22. The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace.) When we come to consider the individual office of the Three Blessed Persons we find that

(*a*) The Father is *the source* of all Peace (1 Thess. v. 23, Phil. iv. 7, 9).

(*b*) The Son *is* our Peace (Eph. ii. 14).

(*c*) The Holy Spirit *brings this Peace* to man (Gal. v. 22).

give you peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation. Nay, in the Church itself, there is the necessity for this severity of treatment, this temporary severance of those who belong to the flock. Peace might seem impossible when there are troubles without and within. But God is a God of Peace. May He give you of His Own."

17. The salutation of *Paul* with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

me Paul

by all means. "Even, if necessary, by such a painful method as this" (Bp. Thorold).

Notice how all the great sections of the Epistle end with prayer.

i. 11. That they may be counted worthy.

ii. 17. That they may be stablished in every good work and word.

iii. 16. That they may have peace, and the Lord Himself, the Giver of peace.

The Lord be with you all. Where the Lord is, there is Peace. St. Paul probably has in mind the words of our Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii. 20).

all, "not excluding those who are walking disorderly" (Lightfoot).

17. **The salutation of Paul with mine own hand.** The Apostle wrote his Epistles through an amanuensis or secretary. To give a guarantee of their genuineness he added his signature and salutation at the end in his own handwriting. Cf.

Col. iv. 18 (R.V.). The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

Sometimes he added more than his mere signature and the customary salutation or benediction. He appears to have written the whole of *Philemon* (Philem. 19) and a considerable section at the close of *Galatians*.

His writing would appear to have been large and laboured. Cf.

Gal. vi. 11 (R.V.). See *with how large letters* I have written unto you with mine own hand.

In one Epistle the name of the amanuensis, Tertius, is mentioned (Rom. xvi. 22).

the token in every epistle. The Apostle's writing had been forged —other letters had been passed off as his (ii. 2). The signature and salutation which had found a place in the First Epistle without note or comment should henceforward, therefore, be the token of genuineness in all St. Paul's Epistles.

Canon Mason remarks in a full note on this phrase, that while it might at first sight seem too audacious for anyone to have conceived the thought of writing a letter under the name of St. Paul, we must bear in mind several points:

(*a*) St. Paul was a familiar figure at Thessalonica. His genuine First Epistle could not have acquired in the eyes of the Thessalonians the sanctity it wears for us.

(*b*) Literary forgeries were not uncommon in that age.

18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. *Amen.*	*omit*
The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.	*omit*

(*c*) Possibly there was not always a direct intention to deceive as to authorship—the renowned name acting rather as a sort of advertisement in the first instance, but without any real concern as to whether the true authorship was discovered or not.

so I write. A little doubtful in meaning, either

(*a*) *This is my handwriting*, referring to the writing itself.

or (*b*) *This is my usual custom, i.e.* to add the salutation in my own hand (Lightfoot).

18. **The grace.** Notice that the Apostle begins and ends the letter with an invocation of *grace* and *peace*.

The grace of our Lord, etc. This is the *salutation* which is to appear in every Epistle, although not always in the same form. It has already appeared in the First Epistle. It appears in complete form in

2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.

In some of the later Epistles it is much shortened. Cf.

Col. iv. 18. Grace be with you.

Amen. Omitted in the R.V. as not being authentic in this Epistle.

The Subscription. This, like the subscription to the First Epistle, is almost certainly incorrect. The Epistle was in all probability written at Corinth. The subscriptions to the Epistles were 'additions' made by Greek editors, possibly as far back as the Second Century (Cambridge Bible).

PASSAGES DESERVING SPECIAL ATTENTION.

I. 1. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,*
(*a*) joint founders of the Thessalonian Church,
(*b*) together at Corinth when the Epistle was written.

I. 3. *we are bound to thank God always for you.* The thanksgiving in Philippians and Thessalonians is unusually fervent.
your faith groweth exceedingly. Notice the progress since the First Epistle was written.
the charity of every one of you . . . aboundeth. Their love was not quite so expansive when the First Epistle was sent. Notice St. Paul's intimate knowledge of his flock.

I. 4. *we ourselves glory in you.* Compare with 1 Thess. i. 4-8 and ii. 20.

I. 5. *a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.* What is the Apostle's line of thought here?
the kingdom of God, here denoting, specially, the future glorious kingdom, but not without reference to the Church on earth.

I. 7. *the Lord Jesus.* Notice the various titles of our blessed Lord in the Epistle.

I. 8. *them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.* What is the distinction here?
the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The good tidings which tells of Him, and which is proclaimed on His authority.

I. 9. *who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.* What is the Apostle's teaching with regard to the future punishment of the wicked?

I. 10. *when he shall come.* Notice carefully the allusions in the Epistle to the Second Coming of Christ.
to be glorified in his saints. How is Christ "glorified in his saints"?
to be admired in all them that believe. R.V. "To be marvelled at in all them that believed."

I. 11. *we pray always for you.* Prayer occurs with unusual frequency in this Epistle.

that our God would count you worthy. Not "that you may *be* worthy," which is impossible.

the good pleasure of his goodness. Notice R.V. rendering. What is the difference in meaning between the renderings of the A.V. and R.V.?

I. 12. How would you use this and other verses to prove the Divinity of our Lord?

II. 1. *coming*=the Second Coming (Gk. *parousia*=presence).

by the coming. The Apostle pleads 'for the sake of' the glorious Coming itself.

by our gathering together unto him, i.e. by the re-union of quick and dead at Christ's Coming.

II. 2. *shaken in mind, i.e.* driven from your sober senses.

troubled, i.e. disturbed and unsettled.

by spirit . . . word . . . letter as from us.

spirit=revelation of the Holy Spirit (here imaginary or fictitious).

word=oral teaching.

letter as from us=an Epistle from St. Paul himself.

The words "as from us" may apply also to *word*, possibly to *spirit.*

the day of Christ, i.e. the Second Advent.

at hand, R.V. "now present."

II. 3. *a falling away,* R.V. "*the* falling away," *i.e.* the great Apostasy which shall threaten the Church before Christ comes.

that man of sin, R.V. "*the* man of sin," apparently the head of the Apostasy.

son of perdition. Explain terms "man of sin," "son of perdition." What other prophecies in Holy Scripture help to throw light upon the present chapter?

II. 4. *exalteth himself above*=exalteth himself exceedingly against.

all that is called God, whether the God of the Christian or the so-called gods of the heathen.

that is worshipped, i.e. any object of reverence.

temple of God. Not necessarily a rebuilt Jewish temple. The whole seems to be figurative.

shewing himself that he is God. The Roman emperors laid claim to divinity.

II. 5. *when I was yet with you.* What allusions are there in the Epistle to St. Paul's actual preaching at Thessalonica?

II. 6. *what withholdeth.* Is this Restrainer a man or a principle?
revealed in his time. God has determined a definite season when the man of sin shall be revealed.

II. 7. *the mystery of iniquity,* R.V. "the mystery of lawlessness."
doth already work. How did it work in St. Paul's day? How in our own?
he who now letteth will let. Note the order of events:
1. a mystery of lawlessness already working,
2. a Restrainer at present acting,
3. the Restrainer removed,
4. the great falling away, accompanying *the Parousia of the man of sin,*
5. *the Parousia of Christ,* bringing about the revelation (in a special sense) and destruction of the man of sin.

II. 8. *that Wicked,* R.V. "the lawless one."
the Lord=the Lord Jesus.
consume with the spirit of his mouth. A metaphor borrowed from the O.T.
brightness, R.V. "manifestation"=our word Epiphany.

II. 9. *whose coming.* The man of sin has a Parousia.
Satan. Notice St. Paul's evident belief in the personality of Satan.
power and signs and lying wonders. The man of sin will support his claims by the working of actual miracles. Compare this with the prophecy of Christ in St. Matt. xxiv.

II. 10. *deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish,* R.V. "deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing." Explain carefully the whole phrase.
that they might be saved. God's will is that *all* should be saved.

II. 11. *for this cause,* etc., *i.e.* because they received not the love of the truth.
God shall send them strong delusion. What is meant by God *sending delusion* (R.V. "a working of error") on wicked men?

II. 12. *damned* = judged, condemned.

II. 13. How does this verse illustrate the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity?
from the beginning, i.e. before the foundation of the world.

God hath chosen, R.V. "God chose." The *choice* was "from eternity," the *call* was "in time."

chosen . . . to salvation, not necessarily to final salvation.

sanctification . . . belief. Holiness of life must accompany Christian faith if final salvation is to be ensured.

II. 14. *he called you.* Notice the three stages (*a*) the choice, (*b*) the call, (*c*) the going on unto perfection with its final reward.

our gospel, i.e. the good tidings *preached* by St. Paul; not the *written* Gospel. How else does St. Paul speak of it?

to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are three possible interpretations.

II. 15. *the traditions, i.e.* the truths *handed on* by the apostles of Christ.

our epistle. Either the First Epistle to the Thessalonians or an epistle unknown to us.

II. 16. *our Lord Jesus Christ himself.* God the Son is mentioned here in terms of equality with the Father, and prayer is offered to Him.

through grace. It is all the free gift of God.

II. 17. *comfort.* Notice the singular verb, although Father and Son are joint nominatives.

III. 1. *pray for us.* St. Paul frequently asks his readers to offer up prayer on his behalf.

the word of the Lord = the Gospel.

may have free course = "may speed swiftly," the language of the 147th Psalm.

be glorified = be received with honour.

as it is with you. Notice the occasions on which the Apostle recognises what is satisfactory in his converts.

III. 2. *that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.* The allusion is probably to the persecuting Jews at Corinth.

unreasonable = outrageous, monstrous.

all men have not faith, R.V. margin "*the* faith," *i.e.* the gospel.

III. 3. *the Lord is faithful.* Notice the play on the word faith.

evil, R.V. "*the* evil," *i.e.* the Evil One.

III. 4. *we have confidence in the Lord*, etc. The Lord = the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. 5. *the love of God*, probably the love which God had for them.

the patient waiting for Christ, R.V. "the patience of Christ," *i.e.* the patient endurance which Christ displayed.

III. 6. *that ye withdraw yourselves.* This does not seem to suggest actual ecclesiastical excommunication.

III. 7. *to follow us,* R.V. "to imitate us."

III. 8. *but wrought.* St. Paul was a tent-maker.
night and day. St. Paul several times in his speeches and writings makes the same statement.

III. 9. *not because we have not power.* The Apostle is anxious to preserve the dignity and claims of his office.

III. 11. *working not at all,* probably because they imagined the day of the Lord to be all but present.
busybodies. Idleness begets gossip and scandal.

III. 12. *command and exhort.* The first as an Apostle, the second as a brother.
with quietness they work. The Apostle enjoins sober industry.

III. 13. *be not weary*=do not falter.

III. 14. *obey not our word by this epistle.* The Epistle would be read before all the brethren. Notice the authority with which St. Paul speaks.

III. 15. *count him not as an enemy.* The object is reform, not rejection.

III. 16. *the Lord of peace.* Here it is the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1 Thessalonians it is God (*i.e.* the Father).

III. 17. *the salutation, i.e.* the autograph signature in verse 17, with the benediction in verse 18.
with mine own hand. The bulk of the Epistle was written by an amanuensis.
the token in every epistle. The Apostle's writing had apparently been forged. (See ii. 2.)

QUESTIONS.

1. Under what circumstances and at what time does the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians seem to have been written?
2. Explain and illustrate by quotations from the text the evils in the Church of the Thessalonians against which the Second Epistle was directed.
3. What may be gathered from the Second Epistle as to the effect which St. Paul's First Epistle had had upon those to whom it was written?
4. How does St. Paul set forth his own behaviour towards the Thessalonians in his missionary work? How does he make his own conduct an object lesson for his converts?
5. Into what error had the Thessalonians fallen in respect to St. Paul's teaching concerning the Coming of our Lord? How does he correct it? What words of our Lord have any bearing on this particular difficulty and St. Paul's solution of it?
6. Explain the following, giving, where necessary, alterations in the Revised Version:
   (*a*) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.
   (*b*) That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.
   (*c*) The Lord direct your hearts into . . . the patient waiting for Christ.
7. What may we infer from the Epistle as to the types of character belonging to the Thessalonians?
8. Shew from the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians that "Faith without works is dead."
9. Comment on the following, giving if necessary the Revised Version rendering:
   (*a*) That our God would . . . fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness.
   (*b*) For this cause God shall send them strong delusion.
   (*c*) Be not weary in well-doing.

10. How would you illustrate from 2 Thessalonians the great truth of the Divinity of Christ?

11. Compare St. Paul's teaching in 2 Thessalonians concerning the Coming of Christ with the teaching of our Lord on the same subject.

12. Who shared with St. Paul the labour of founding the Thessalonian Church? How is this brought out in the Epistle?

13. Explain the following passages of the Authorised Version in their connection with the context, and where necessary emend them, referring to the Revised Version.
    (*a*) To be admired in all them that believe.
    (*b*) With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.
    (*c*) The Lord is faithful who shall . . . keep you from evil.

14. What is St. Paul's teaching in 2 Thessalonians concerning (*a*) the Coming of the Lord, (*b*) the attitude of Christians with regard to it?

15. What would you gather from 2 Thessalonians to have been subjects of St. Paul's teaching at Thessalonica? How does this agree with the record of his visit given in the Acts of the Apostles?

16. It has been said that 2 Thessalonians is practically a comment on our Lord's words, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Illustrate the truth of this by giving the subject-matter of, and quotations from, the Epistle.

17. Explain the following in connection with the context:
    (*a*) We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God.
    (*b*) Then shall that Wicked be revealed.
    (*c*) Note that man, and have no company with him.

18. What does St. Paul tell us with regard to our Lord's Second Coming as it will affect (*a*) believers, (*b*) unbelievers?

19. How would you reconcile the saying of our Lord, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth," with the words of St. Paul, "If any will not work, neither let him eat"?

20. Give a short analysis of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. In what respects do the Pauline Epistles generally agree in plan?

21. Comment fully upon the following verse:
    "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write."
    What allusion is there in 2 Thessalonians to any other letter of St. Paul?

22. Give as nearly as possible in the words of the Revised Version the Apostle's description of the Man of Sin.

To what passage in the Old Testament does it bear a strong resemblance?

23. Explain carefully the allusion in each of the following phrases:
   (*a*) Unreasonable and wicked men.
   (*b*) The traditions which ye have been taught.
   (*c*) You who are troubled.
   (*d*) The mystery of iniquity.

24. Explain fully the following in relation to the context:
   (*a*) He as God sitteth in the temple of God.
   (*b*) He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
   (*c*) God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

25. Show from the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians that St. Paul had great belief in the power of prayer.

26. How would you illustrate from 2 Thessalonians the truths underlying the following quotation from the Church Catechism? (Illustrate if possible each italicised phrase):

"I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that *He hath called me* to this *state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may *continue in the same unto my life's end.*"

27. What has 2 Thessalonians to tell us with regard to the Person and Office of (*a*) God the Father, (*b*) God the Son, (*c*) God the Holy Ghost?

Quote any verse in which there is direct reference to all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

28. Describe the geographical position of Thessalonica. What circumstances favoured its choice as a missionary centre?

29. Show clearly the line of thought which leads St. Paul to mention the *election* of the Thessalonians *to salvation.* How is he careful to put before them the possibility of a fall from grace?

30. Mention passages in the Epistle in which St. Paul (*a*) asserts his authority as founder of the Thessalonian Church and an Apostle of God, (*b*) bases his exhortation on the affectionate relations between himself and his flock.

31. "*So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*"

Explain this in relation to the context and shew any resemblance which the passage has to prophecies in (*a*) the Old Testament, (*b*) the New Testament.

32. "*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet.*"

What does St. Paul give as the reason for this obligation to thank God? Mention any other passages in which he expresses his confidence in his Thessalonian disciples.

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GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO.

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St. Martin's Street

London, W.C.

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